Callamus

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John Miller's Book

Counſels of Prudence for the Uſe of Young People.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

Wiſdom of the Serpent and the Innocence of the Dove:

In which are recommended general Rules of Prudence; with particular Directions relating to Buſineſs, Converſation, Friendſhip, and Uſefulneſs.

By *NATHANIEL LARDNER.*

Publiſhed at the Deſire of ſome Friends.

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MATTH. x. 16.

Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.

THIS advice is found among thoſe directions, which our bleſſed Lord gave his diſciples, when he ſent them from him upon a commiſſion in his life-time here on earth. *Theſe twelve Jeſus ſent forth, and commanded them, ſaying: Go not into the way of the Gentils, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. And as ye go, preach, ſaying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the ſick, caſt out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.* *Introduction.* Matth. x. 5--8.

Introduction.

'Tis reasonable to conclude, that the disciples received this commission with much pleasure and satisfaction, accounting it a great honour done them, and conceiving at the same time fond expectations of honour and acceptance wherever they came. They were to carry with them very joyful and desirable tidings; That *the kingdom of heaven was at hand:* They were empowered to confer very great benefits, and were required to do all *freely*, without receiving any gratuity. The limitation in their commission could not but be a high recommendation of it: the good news was to be published to *Jews*, and them only; not to *Gentils*, nor to *Samaritans*.

But our Lord thought not fit to dismiss them without some particular counsels and directions, which would be of use to them now, but especially hereafter; when their commission should receive an enlargement, both with regard to the subject matter of their message, and the persons to whom they were to carry it. And he judged it needful to give them some hints of a different reception from what they thought of, and some cautions to be upon their guard, that they might not afford any just ground

ground for miſconſtructions or injurious reflections, nor do any thing that ſhould tend to draw upon themſelves a diſagreeable treatment. He therefore tells them: *Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves.* You mean well yourſelves, and you think well of others. But I muſt forewarn you, that many, to whom you are going, have ſelfiſh and malicious diſpoſitions, and are ſubtle and artful. For which reaſon you are to be cautious and prudent: *Be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.* Maintaining your preſent innocence and integrity, decline dangers as much as poſſible, and take care not to give any ground for reflection upon your conduct. *Introduction.*

This advice then of our Saviour to his diſciples will give me juſt occaſion to recommend ſome rules and directions of prudent conduct and behaviour to thoſe who are entering upon the ſtage of action in the world. In doing which I ſhall take this method.

I. I ſhall repreſent the nature of prudence.

II. I ſhall ſhew the neceſſity, grounds and reaſons of prudence.

III. I

III. I intend to lay down ſome rules and directions concerning a prudent conduct, with regard both to our words and actions.

Nature of Prudence.

I. I ſhall repreſent the nature of prudence. In general, it is a diſcerning and employing the moſt proper means of obtaining thoſe ends which we propoſe to ourſelves. He who aims at his own advancement is prudent, if he contrives a good ſcheme for that purpoſe, and then puts in practiſe the ſeveral parts of it with diligence and diſcretion. If the end aimed at be the good and welfare of others, in any particular reſpect; then prudence lyes in taking thoſe methods which are moſt likely to promote the advantage of thoſe perſons, and in doing that in the way leſt prejudicial to ourſelves, and moſt conſiſtent with our ſafety.

It is an important branch of prudence to avoid faults. One falſe ſtep ſometimes ruins, or however greatly embaraſſes and retards a good deſign. Therefore prudent conduct depends more on great caution and circumſpection than great abilities. A bright

bright genius is neceſſarie for producing a fine compoſition. Courage and preſence of mind are needful for a hazardous undertaking: But circumſpection alone, ſuch caution as ſecures againſt errours and faults, makes up a great part of prudent conduct, by preventing many evils and inconveniences. *Nature of Prudence.*

Prudence likewiſe ſuppoſes the maintaining of innocence and integrity. We may not neglect our duty to avoid danger. The principal wiſdom is to approve ourſelves to God, and 'tis better to ſuffer any temporal evil, than incur the divine diſpleaſure. Theſe diſciples of Chriſt were to go out and preach, ſaying: *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* That was the work aſſigned them by their Lord and maſter, which therefore it was their duty to perform, and they could by no means decline. But they might do it in the way which would leſt expoſe them to inconveniences, and was moſt likely to ſecure acceptance for their meſſage and themſelves. This is prudence.

We are not out of a pretenſe of diſcretion to deſert the cauſe of truth. But we are to eſpouſe it with ſafety, if we can; that

Nature of Prudence. that is, maintain it in the way leſt offenſive to others, and leſt dangerous to ourſelves.

Nor have we a right from any rules of prudence to uſe unlawful methods to obtain our end. Our end is ſuppoſed to be good, and the means muſt be ſo likewiſe. Thus far of the nature of prudence.

Reaſons of Prudence. II. I would now ſhew the neceſſity, grounds and reaſons of prudence. Theſe are chiefly the wickedneſs and the weakneſs of men. The former is the reaſon which our Lord refers to. *Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: Be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents.* 'Tis upon this ground likewiſe, that St. *Paul* recommends the practiſe of prudent caution: *See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.* Some men are malicious and deſigning, enemies to truth and virtue, and to all thar are hearty friends of either of them. Good men therefore are obliged to be upon their guard, and make uſe of ſome methods of defenſe and ſecurity. Others are weak and ſimple, and therefore liable to be miſled and impoſed upon by the inſinuations of the ſubtle and malicious.

Eph. v. 15, 16.

Nay,

Nay, if there were no bad men, yet there would be need of a prudent behaviour, becauſe ſome who have not much reflection or experience are apt to put wrong conſtructions upon harmleſs actions. *Reaſons of Prudence.*

And this leads us ſomewhat farther into the nature of prudence, and to obſerve a particular, which could not be ſo well taken notice of, before we had obſerved this ground and reaſon of it. For a great part of prudence lyes in denying ourſelves, ſo as to keep ſome way within the limits of virtue. A good man, if all about him were wiſe and good, might be ſecure in his innocence alone. It might then be ſufficient to mean well, and to purſue directly the good ends he has in view, without doing any harm in the proſecution of them. But now, on account of the weakneſs of ſome, he muſt not only be innocent, but he muſt alſo obviate miſconſtructions and miſrepreſentations.

We may perceive this in an inſtance or two. Our Saviour directs his diſciples at the eleventh verſe of this chapter: *Into whatſoever city or town ye enter, enquire who is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence.* This is more particularly expreſſed in ano-

Reasons of Prudence.

ther Gospel: *In the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: go not from house to house.* Luke x. 7. They had not then in the Eastern countries houses of public entertainment. And it was usual for men of good dispositions, such as our Lord terms *worthy*, to entertain strangers. The disciples were sent two and two, they were not to make a long abode in any place, and would not be thought burdensome by any that were *worthy*, or hospitable men. But our Lord charges them *not to go from house to house*, or remove from the place they had first resorted to. This perhaps might be sometimes done very reasonably. But our Lord does now in a manner absolutely restrain his disciples from acting thus, whatever some others might do; that they might not give any the least ground of suspicion, or insinuation, that they were curious about their entertainment.

It was upon this principle that the Apostle *Paul* went yet farther, and in some places, particularly in *Greece*, waved his right to a subsistence from those he taught. As he observes to the Corinthians: *If others be partakers of this power over you, are not* 1 Cor. ix. 12.

not we rather? Nevertheleſs we have not uſed this power, but ſuffer all things, leſt we ſhould hinder the goſpel of Chriſt. Again: *Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myſelf ſervant to all, that I might gain the more.* This rule he obſerved alſo at *Theſſalonica: For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for labouring night and day, becauſe we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the goſpel of God.* I have now given you a view of the nature of prudence, and the reaſons of it.

Reaſons of Prudence.

ver. 12.

1 Theſſ. ii. 9.

III. In the next place I am to lay down ſome rules and directions concerning a prudent conduct, with regard to our words and actions.

Rules of Prudence.

This is indeed a work of ſome niceneſs and delicacie, and is moſt properly reſerved for men of diſtinguiſhed characters. There is likewiſe oftentimes a backwardneſs in men to pay any deference to directions of this kind, except they are delivered by men of large experience, and of great renown for wiſdom. For this reaſon, as it ſeems, *Solomon* in his book of Proverbs, containing excellent rules of virtue and

Rules of Prudence.

prudence, thought fit to introduce Wiſdom herſelf proclaming her kind intentions to mankind, and delivering many of thoſe directions, that men might be the better induced to hearken to them. And when he was about to publiſh ſome remarks upon the world, and the affairs of men in it; he aggrandiſes his own character, and ſets it off to the beſt advantage: giving himſelf the title of *the Preacher*, or Collector; one who had been long and carefully employed in laying up a ſtore of juſt and uſeful obſervations; and who had good opportunities for that purpoſe, as he was *King in Jeruſalem:* affirming likewiſe, that he had *given his heart to ſeek and to ſearch out by Wiſdom concerning all things that are done under heaven*; that he *had ſeen all the works that are done under the Sun*, and that his *heart had great experience in wiſdom and knowledge.*

Eccl. i. 1.

ver. 1.

---- 12.

ver. 13.

ver. 14.

ver. 16.

As we have before us for our guidance the obſervations of thoſe who have been eminent for wiſdom, and whoſe character is well eſtabliſhed in the world; it may be preſumed, that all theſe high qualifications are not now requiſite for a performance of this nature. And I would hope, that they, for

for whom the following directions are chiefly intended, are already ſo wiſe, or ſo well diſpoſed at leſt, as to be willing to hearken to good counſel from any one who means them well. It will be my care to deliver ſuch rules of prudence, as have been approved and recommended by thoſe who have had a knowledge of the world, and are eſteemed good judges of mankind. And I ſhall generally ſupport the rules laid down by reaſons, which if they don't convince, the counſel itſelf may be the leſs regarded. *Rules of Prudence.*

Rules of this ſort are very numerous, and have been often given, as many are in the book of Proverbs, without connection or dependence on each other. I ſhall propoſe thoſe I mention in the following method: Firſt I ſhall obſerve ſome general rules of prudence, and then ſome particular directions relating to buſineſs, civil converſation in the world, more intimate friendſhip and private relations; laſtly, uſefulneſs to others.

1. I ſhall mention ſome general rules of prudence. The preſervation of our integrity in acting ſtrictly according to the rules *General Rules of Prudence.*

General Rules of Prudence.

rules of religion and virtue will not be allowed a place among theſe rules. However, (as has been already ſhewn) it ought to be ſuppoſed. Our bleſſed Lord does not omit the innocence of the dove, when he recommends the wiſdom of the ſerpent. I muſt therefore again deſire it may be obſerved, that nothing I am about to ſay is to be underſtood as inconſiſtent with integrity; which, though not properly a rule of prudence, is oftentimes of advantage, and is both a means of ſecurity, and adds weight and influence to a man's character.

Prov. x. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely, but he that perverteth his way ſhall be known.*

ch. xii. 28. Again: In *the way of righteouſneſs there is life, and in the path way thereof there is*

ch. iv. 18. *no death.* Moreover, *the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Though virtuous and upright men ſhould for a while lye in obſcurity, they may ſhine hereafter with a greater luſtre. And, which is above all external conſiderations and advantages of this preſent world, virtue is of the higheſt importance to the inward peace of the mind, and our everlaſting happineſs in the world to come. Suppoſing then a ſtrict

regard

regard to uprightneſs of heart, and innocence of behaviour;

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(1.) The firſt rule of prudence I lay down is this; that we ſhould endeavour to know ourſelves. He that knows not himſelf may undertake deſigns he is not fit for, and can never accompliſh, in which he muſt therefore neceſſarily meet with diſappointment. Nor can any man have comfort and ſatisfaction in an employment that is unſuitable to his temper.

Beſide a knowledge of our own genius, temper and inclination; it is needful, that we ſhould be alſo poſſeſſed of a juſt idea of our outward circumſtance and condition, and the relation we bear to perſons about us. It is one branch of prudence for a man to behave agreeably to his own particular character. If he miſtakes that, he will be guilty of many improprieties. But a juſt diſcernment of our own circumſtances, and of our relation to other men, will make way for an agreeable and acceptable deportment.

The knowledge of yourſelves will prevent conceit on the one hand, and meaneſs of ſpirit and conduct on the other. You will readily act with that modeſt aſſurance, which

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which becomes your birth, eſtate, age, ſtation, abilities, skill and other advantages, without departing from your juſt right, or aſſuming more than ought to be reaſonably allowed you.

(2.) Endeavour to know other men. It is a point of charity to hope the beſt of every man, and of prudence to fear the worſt. Not that theſe are inconſiſtent. It would be to miſrepreſent a Chriſtian virtue extremely to ſuppoſe, that it obliged us to truſt men without any knowledge of them. We are to hope and ſuppoſe of every man, that he is good and honeſt, till we have ſome proof to the contrarie. This is the judgement of charity. But we are not bound to employ men, or confide in them, till we have ſome poſitive evidences of their honeſty and capacity for the truſt we would commit to them, or the work in which we would employ them.

Some men are unreaſonably ſuſpicious and jealous. Becauſe they are bad themſelves, or becauſe they have had dealings with ſome that are ſo, they have formed a notion that all men are falſe and unfaithful. This is a wicked extreme. They who are in it are fitly puniſhed for ſo diſ-

advantageous

advantageous and unjuſt an opinion of their fellow-creatures. Such muſt needs become contemptible themſelves. They may be ſafe, but they can never make any figure in ſociety; it being, I ſuppoſe, impoſſible for one man alone to carry on any important deſign, or do any thing conſiderable in any buſineſs or profeſſion. There is therefore a neceſſity of mutual confidence among men. *General Rules of Prudence.*

On the other hand, ſome good men are apt to think, that all other men are ſo. This is oftentimes the ſentiment likewiſe of the young and unexperienced. And indeed it muſt be ſome uneaſineſs to thoſe who are innocent and undeſigning themſelves, to ſuſpect other men, or to withhold truſt and confidence from them. But however kind and favourable their apprehenſions and inclinations may be, it would certainly be imprudent to truſt to all appearances, andgive credit to every pretenſe. The counſel in the text is given by our Lord to his honeſt well-meaning diſciples, becauſe he knew there were men in the world of bad diſpoſitions, more than theſe unexperienced diſciples were aware of: *Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt*

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of wolves: be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents. Solomon has an obſervation to this purpoſe: *The ſimple believeth every word; but the prudent looketh well to his goings.* The confidence placed in men ought to be proportioned to the evidences of their faithfulneſs and capacity. If any act otherwiſe, there is danger of ſhame and diſappointment. It muſt therefore be of great advantage in life to be able to form a true judgement of men.

Prov. xiv. 15.

The knowledge of men, the skill of diſcerning their talents and diſpoſitions, will be of uſe not only in buſineſs, but alſo in civil converſation, in the choice of friendſhips and relations, in deſigns of uſefulneſs, and indeed in every occaſion and occurrence of life. You will thereby know, whom to truſt with ſafety, whom to be free and open with in converſation, whoſe favour it is your intereſt to ſeek, on whom you can beſtow your favours and ſervices with a likely proſpect of doing ſome good, or with hopes of grateful returns, if ever you ſhould want them.

(3.) Watch, and embrace opportunities. This is a rule, which ought to be obſerved with regard to our words and actions.

There

There is a ſeaſon for every thing, and every thing is beautiful in it's ſeaſon. There is a time to ſpeak, and a time to keep ſilence, ſays Solomon. *A word ſpoken in due ſeaſon, how good is it? A word fitly ſpoken is like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver.* *General Rules of Prudence.* Eccl. iii. 1. 11. Prov. xv. 23. Eccl. iii. 7. Prov. xxv. 11.

In all affairs there are ſome ſpecial opportunities, which it is a point of wiſdom to emprove. *He that gathers in ſummer is a wiſe ſon. But he that ſleepeth in harveſt is a ſon that cauſeth ſhame.* Some opportunities, like that here mentioned by *Solomon*, are obvious to all. And it muſt be groſs ſtupidity not to know them, and incorrigible ſloth to neglect them. But there are ſome opportunities, which will be obſerved and taken by none but thoſe who are diſcerning and attentive. Every one can ſee an opportunity, when it is paſt: but he only who is wiſe, ſees it beforehand, or perceives and embraces it when preſent. ch. x. 5.

(4.) Adviſe with thoſe who are able to give you good counſel. *Without counſel purpoſes are diſappointed, but in the multitude of counſellors they are eſtabliſhed.* At leſt, in all important and difficult caſes call in the aid of ſome friends. *Every purpoſe* Prov. xv. 22. ch. xx. 18.

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is eſtabliſhed by counſel, and with good advice make war. It is great preſumption in any man to be ſelf-ſufficient, and to ſuppoſe, that in all caſes he can act well by his own skill alone.

As counſel ought to be asked, ſo there ſhould be a diſpoſition to hearken to it; or at leſt, to weigh well the reaſons that are brought for or againſt any deſign. *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkens unto counſel is wiſe.*

Prov. xii. 15.

But yet there is need of ſome diſcretion in the choice of counſellors. They ſhould be uſually the aged and experienced; always, if poſſible, ſuch as are ſincere and diſintereſted. I ſcarce need therefore to caution you againſt adviſing with your rivals and competitors. If you are ſo happy as to have parents, to whom you can have recourſe, you muſt be in the right to conſult with them in affairs of moment. If you have not this advantage, however recollect the advices they have given you. Perhaps they have left with you ſome counſels of prudence, as well as of virtue. When you are forming deſigns inconſiſtent with their counſels, give ſuch deſigns a ſecond conſideration, before you take a final

final reſolution. This may be reckoned a point of wiſdom, as well as a piece of reſpect due to thoſe who heartily wiſhed your welfare. *General Rules of Prudence.*

After them adviſe with, and hearken to thoſe who are moſt like them in a ſincere and unaffected concern for your true intereſt. But if any whom you conſult, always adviſe according to your own inclinations, you may be aſſured they are not your friends. It is not your intereſt they conſult, but their own. So likewiſe, if any, of whom you honeſtly ask advice, with an intention to be informed and guided by them, are ſhy and reſerved, though at other times, and upon other occaſions, they are open enough, you ſhould remember not to go to them again. It is not worth the while to reveal your deſigns to ſuch. It can be of no advantage, and may be attended with ſome inconveniences.

(5.) Reſtrain and govern your affections. This is of great importance to the prudent conduct of life. In all debates he who is calm and compoſed, as all are ſenſible, has a vaſt advantage over a heated adverſary. But I mean not the reſtraint of anger

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ger only, or reſentment upon a provocation; but a ſteady government of all the paſſions, and a calm and compoſed temper of mind in all occurrences. He who is overſet by a croſs accident, is loſt beyond redreſs, and can never get out of a difficulty, though there ſtill remain ſeveral ways of eſcape and recovery.

Avoid too great eagerneſs for any earthly thing. Men of violent inclinations are immediately for action. They have no ſooner thought of a thing, but they muſt have it. They are at once paſſed the ſtate of deliberation within themſelves, and of conſultation with others. Men who are extremely eager for gain and riches, are not always the moſt ſucceſsful. They precipitate all their meaſures. They can never have an opportunity, becauſe they can't wait till it offers. Such uſually run deſperate hazards, and accordingly meet with great loſſes. *Solomon*, who has ſo often ſpoken of the benefit of diligence, does nevertheleſs diſcourage eagerneſs of ſpirit and action, as ruinous and deſtructive. *The thoughts of the diligent*, ſays he, *tend only to plenteouſneſs: but of every one that is haſty, only to want.*

Prov xxi. 5.

Then,

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Then, the men of haſty ſpirit often plunge themſelves into great difficulties; which no after thought of their own, nor kind aſſiſtance of their friends can extricate them out of. What *Solomon* ſays of men ſubject to intemperate anger is very likely to be the caſe of all who have any other ungoverned paſſion: *A man of great wrath ſhall ſuffer puniſhment: for, if thou deliver him, yet thou muſt do it again.* If you help them out of one trouble, yet they will ſoon run themſelves into ſome other. And in another place the ſame wiſe man has given a lively image of the defenſeleſs and deplorable condition of thoſe who are under the government of violent paſſions: *He that has no rule over his own ſpirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*

Prov. xix. 19.

Prov. xxv. 28.

It ſeems to be for this reaſon, that men of leſſer abilities do often ſucceed better in buſineſs, and indeed in ſome important affairs, than the more acute and penetrating. They have ſlow capacities, but they are abundantly recompenſed by the coolneſs of their paſſions. They move on a ſteady, even pace, without ſlips or falls; till at length, to the ſurpriſe of all who were not very

General Rules of Prudence. very diſcerning indeed, they diſtance many who ſet out with much more life and vigour.

Theſe are general rules of prudence. They need not to be mentioned again. But they ought to be obſerved upon every particular occaſion, and will be of uſe in all the affairs and actions of life that require prudent conduct and management.

Particular Rules of Prudence. § II. I am now to lay down ſome particular rules of prudence concerning ſeveral branches of conduct, and divers circumſtances of life. They will concern theſe four points; buſineſs, civil converſation, more intimate friendſhips and relations, and uſefulneſs to others.

Buſineſs. (1.) Of buſineſs. I may not preſume to give many directions relating to this matter. But I apprehend it to be a point of great prudence, for a man to endeavour to be fully maſter of his employment. He who is skillful in his calling, and diligently attends to it, and is punctual to his promiſes and engagements, can ſeldom fail of encouragement. Theſe may be generally reckoned ſurer means of ſucceſs, than a large acquaintance, addreſs, importunity, or

er any other ſuch like arts of procuring the dealings of men: though theſe need not be entirely neglected, and may be of uſe, if they are not too much depended on. Intereſt is a prevailing principle, and that will diſpoſe men to be concerned with, and employ thoſe who are skilful, diligent, and punctual. *Buſineſs.*

'Tis alſo eſteemed a point of prudence for men to abide in the employment, to which they have been educated, and in which they have once engaged; unleſs there be ſome great and particular inconvenience attending it, or ſome ſtrong and peculiar inducement to another.

But by no means hearken to the ſpeeches of thoſe, who would draw you off from all employment. Some there are in the world, men of ſprightly and aſpiring fanſies, (as they would be thought) who would perſwade you, that buſineſs is below the dignity of rational beings; or however, of all who would ſhine and be diſtinguiſhed. You will be juſtified by *Solomon* in throwing contempt on ſuch imaginations: *He that is deſpiſed, and has a ſervant, is better than he that honoureth himſelf, and lacketh bread.* Again, *He that tilleth his land,* Prov. xii. 9. Ver. 11.

Buſineſs. *ſhall have plenty of bread, but he that followeth vain perſons ſhall have poverty enough.*

Converſation. (2.) The next thing concerning which I would give ſome directions is civil converſation. In general; endeavour to act according to your own character, and maintain that ſuitably to the perſons you meet with, of different abilities, principles and circumſtances.

He is happy in the art of converſation, who can preſerve a mean; without being light, or formal; neither too reſerved, nor too open. Reſervedneſs is diſagreeable and offenſive; too great openeſs, in mixed company, with which you are not well acquainted, is often attended with dangerous conſequences. It may be a good rule for every man, to guard eſpecially againſt that extreme, which he is moſt liable to fall into; by which he is in the greateſt danger of expoſing himſelf, or offending others. Which is the worſt extreme, may not be eaſy to determine. But I think, if we will take the judgement of *Solomon*, too great openeſs muſt be the moſt inconſiſtent with prudence. For ſilence is with him a mark of wiſdom, and there is ſcarce any one thing he has oftener recommended than

than the government of the tongue, nor any thing he has more plainly, and more frequently condemned, than talkativeneſs. I ſhall remind you of ſome of his ſayings upon this argument. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin. But he that refraineth his lips is wiſe.* Prov. x. 19. *He that hath knowledge, ſpareth his words: even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wiſe, and he that ſhutteth his lips, is eſteemed a man of underſtanding.* ch. xvii. 27, 28. *The tongue of the wiſe uſeth knowledge aright. But the mouth of fools poureth out fooliſhneſs.* ch. xv. 2. *A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wiſe man keepeth it in till afterwards.* ch. xxix. 11. *Wiſdom reſteth in the heart of him that has underſtanding: but that which is in the midſt of fools is made known.* Prov. xiv. 33. *He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his mouth, ſhall have deſtruction.* ch. xiii. 3. Eſpecially, be cautious of what you ſay of others; and be not too forward in giving characters, either by way of praiſe or diſpraiſe.

The only end of converſation is not to entertain, or inſtruct others. You are likewiſe to aim at your own emprovement, and the encreaſe of your preſent ſtock of learning and knowledge. Nor is it ne-

Converſation.

ceſſarie, in order to be agreeable, that you ſhould entertain the company with diſcourſe. You may as much oblige ſome men by patient attention to what they ſay, as by producing juſt and new obſervations of your own. For young perſons particularly, ſilence and modeſtie muſt be advantageous qualities in converſation. St. *James*'s precept is general: *Let every man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak:* And if attended to, would leſſen the multitude of ſome mens words, very much to their own benefit, and the emprovement of ſociety.

James i. 19.

Another rule of prudence relating to this matter, which is alſo a point of duty, is: *If poſſible, live peaceably with all men.* Do not needleſsly offend, or diſoblige any. A reſolution to pleaſe men at all adventures, amidſt the preſent variety of ſentiments and affections in the world, would engage us, at ſeaſons, to deſert the cauſe of truth, liberty and virtue. And therefore our Lord has juſtly pronounced a woe upon thoſe who are univerſally applauded, ſaying: *Woe unto you, when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you.* Such a reputation is rarely to be obtained without a baſe and criminal indifference for ſome things very valuable

Rom. xii. 18.

Luke vi. 26.

valuable and important to the general intereſts of mankind. However, do not deſpiſe any man, though ever ſo mean. Malice and hatred are active principles. And, as has been often obſerved: One enemie may do you more miſchief, than many friends can do you good. Nor is there any man ſo mean, or ſo feeble, but he may ſome time have an opportunity of doing you much good, or much harm. *Converſation.*

You are not to be afraid of men, nor too ſollicitous to pleaſe them, nor to ſtoop to flattery or meaneſs to gain their favour. Theſe are methods neither very virtuous, nor very prudent. For they ſeldom procure laſting eſteem or affection. If you gain mens favour by flattery, you can keep it no longer than you are willing to be their ſlaves or their tools. But you may endeavour by eaſie civilities, and real ſervices to oblige and gain all you can. This we may do, this we ought to do, according to the rules of chriſtianity, good breeding and prudence.

Chooſe, as near as may be, the converſation of thoſe who are wiſer and more experienced than yourſelves. Avoid the company of thoſe, who indulge intemperate

Conversation. rate mirth, and neglect the rules of decence; from whom you can expect no benefit, and from whom you are in danger of receiving a taint to your virtue, or a blot to your reputation. *He that walketh with wise persons,* saith Solomon, *shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

Prov. xiii. 20.

Friendship. (3.) In the third place I shall mention some observations concerning more intimate friendships and private relations. It is a rule to choose friends among acquaintance, and not to enter into intimacie with those of whom you have had no trial, because a false friend is the most dangerous enemie. *Solomon* has a direction relating to this point: *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not.* The meaning is not, that we should not desert such, or refuse to assist them when they are in distress: but it is a rule of prudence, to choose for friends, or to apply to those, when we are in any trouble or difficulty, whose sincerity and faithfulness have been tried and experienced.

Pro. xxviii. 10.

In the choice of friends it may be prudent to have some regard to equality of age, as well as circumstance, and to an agreement

agreement of ſentiments and diſpoſitions. *Friendſhip.*

If you are to avoid the converſation of the openly vicious,(as was before obſerved) you are to make friendſhip only with men of known and approved virtue. Let thoſe be your friends whom God himſelf loves; the meek, the humble, the peaceable who abhor ſtrife and contention. *Solomon*'s caution againſt familiarity with men of a contrary diſpoſition is delivered with ſome peculiar concern and earneſtneſs: *Make no friendſhip*, ſays he, *with an angry man, and with a furious man thou ſhalt not go; leſt thou learn his ways, and get a ſnare to thy ſoul.* Prov. xxii. 24, 25. You may likewiſe conſider, whether they ſhew a good economy in their own affairs: what has hitherto been their behaviour among their friends and acquaintance: what proofs they have given of fidelity, diſcretion, candour, generoſity. The more good properties meet in your friend, the more entire and comfortable will be your friendſhip, and the more likely is it to be durable. Happy is the man, who has a few friends; true, diſcreet, generous. But to admit into intimacie men deſtitute of all good qualities, who neither have faithfulneſs nor generoſity

Friendship. sity to stand by you in distresses and afflictions, nor wisdom to direct you in difficulties, would be only to encrease the troubles and vexations of life, without abating any of them, or making provision for a perplexed and difficult circumstance.

Solomon, who was sensible of the blessing of a true friend, and has described the advantages and the offices of friendship, has also strongly represented the disappointment and vexation of misplaced confidence: *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth: for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not easily broken.* But then he has observed likewise by way of caution and admonition: *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.*

Prov. xvii. 17. Eccles. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12. Prov. xxv. 19.

When you have adopted any into intimacie and friendship, they are in a great measure

meaſure upon a level with relations. *Friendſhip.* Though they differ ſomewhat, I ſhall ſpeak of them jointly, to avoid prolixity.

There are here two things principally to be aimed at: one is, that friendſhips and alliances be preſerved without open ruptures: the other is, that whilſt there remains an outward ſhew of friendſhip, or alliances ſubſiſt, there may be a real harmonie, and a mutual exchange of affections and ſervices.

In the firſt place, it is of great importance, that friendſhips and alliances, once contracted, ſhould be preſerved, without open ruptures. For, though you have right on your ſide; yet breaches between friends, or relatives, are ſeldom without ſcandal to both parties. But if you eſcape that, you will not avoid all uneaſineſs in yourſelves. A diſtant ſtrangeneſs, or open variance after mutual endearments, will be grievous to men of kind and generous diſpoſitions. The other end is the preſervation of a real harmonie.

In order to ſecure both theſe ends ſeveral things are of great uſe. 'Tis an obſervation of *Solomon* relating to this point: *A man that has friends muſt ſhew himſelf friendly.* You muſt not admit a ſelfiſh Pro. xviii. 24.

Friendſhip. temper. You are to be concerned for your friend's intereſt, as well as your own.

As perfection is not to be found on earth, you are to be prepared and diſpoſed to overlook ſome faults. You are not to know every thing which you ſee or hear.

Prov. xvii. 9. *He that covereth a tranſgreſſion ſeeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter, ſeparateth very friends.*

ch. xii. 16. *A fools wrath is preſently known: but a prudent man covereth ſhame.* If any difference happen, drop it again as ſoon as you recover your temper.

ch. xvii. 14. *The beginning of ſtrife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.* You are not to break with a friend for a ſmall matter.

The better to ſecure the laſting love and good will of your friends, aim not barely at the preſervation of a real affection for them, and the performance of real ſervices, but conſult likewiſe the manner of performing benefits. You think this worthy of your regard in order to gain a friendſhip: Why ſhould you not alſo for preſerving, or cheriſhing it?

Indeed, all good offices ſhould be done in an obliging manner. And friendly actions are to be emproved by friendly words. There is a polite piece of advice in th book

book of Eccleſiaſticus: *My ſon, blemiſh not thy good deeds; neither uſe uncomfortable words, when thou giveſt any thing. Shall not the dew aſſwage the heat? So is a word better than a gift. Lo, is not a word better than a gift? But both are with a gracious man.* *Friendſhip.* Ecc. xviii. 15, 16, 17,

Treſpaſs not too far on the goodneſs and affection of the kindeſt and moſt loving friend or relative by too frequent contradictions, eſpecially in matters of ſmall moment; or by too keen, or too frequent jeſts, or by any ſeeming neglect, or a rude familiarity: but whilſt you uſe the openeſs, freedom and confidence of a friend; oblige yourſelves to the ſame, or very near the ſame outward forms of civility and reſpect with which you receive a ſtranger. This muſt be of ſome importance, becauſe few men can perſwade themſelves, that they are really beloved, when they ſeem to be deſpiſed.

(4.) The laſt thing to be ſpoken to is unſefulneſs to others. Though I am giving rules and directions chiefly to young people, who are but ſetting out in the world; yet I think it not proper to omit entirely this matter, there being few good and innocent perſons, however young, but have *Uſefulneſs.*

Uſefulneſs. alſo ſome generoſity; and they are apt to be forming deſigns of uſefulneſs to other men, as well as of advancement for themſelves.

There are two branches of uſefulneſs; one concerning the intereſt of civil ſociety, the other the intereſt of truth and religion: or the temporal, and the ſpiritual good and welfare of men.

One branch of uſefulneſs is ſerving the intereſt of civil ſociety. For this every man may be concerned, having firſt carefully informed himſelf about it, that he may make a true judgement wherein it conſiſts. You ſhould manifeſt a ſteady regard to the public welfare upon every occaſion that requires your aſſiſtance: ſhewing, that you are not to be impoſed upon by falſe pretenſes, and that your integrity is inviolable: That you will not for a little preſent profit, nor for all your own perſonal ſhare in the world, ſell, or betray the welfare of the public and of mankind in general. If you maintain this ſteadineſs in the way ſuitable to your ſtation, it will procure you weight and influence. I ſuppoſe this may be more adviſable, than to imitate thoſe, who out of a forward zeal for the public have been ſo far tranſport-

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ed as to leave their proper ſtation, and ſet upon reforming the world, hoping to root out at once all abuſes and corruptions. From ſome things that have already happened in the world, in almoſt every age and part of it, one may ſafely foretell, what will be the iſſue of ſuch an undertaking: You will be baffled, and then deſpiſed. Poſſibly, *Solomon* has an eye to ſuch attempts as theſe, when he ſays: *Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyſelf over-wiſe: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?* Ecc. vii. 16. *Uſefulneſs.*

It is a regular and becoming deportment in a man's own proper ſtation, which is moſt likely to give him weight and authority. Go on therefore by a juſt diſcharge of all the duties of your condition, to lay up a ſtock of reputation and influence. To do this will be great prudence, and to improve it, as occaſions offer, or to hazard and lay it all out for the good of the public, in a caſe of emergence, will be both prudent and generous.

The other branch of uſefulneſs is promoting the intereſt of truth and religion. There are three or four rules to be obſerved here, which may be collected from ſome directions, and the example of our bleſſed

Lord

Uſefulneſs. Lord and his apoſtles. Caſt not your pearls before ſwine: If they perſecute you in one city, flee into another: Inſtruct men, as they are able to bear it: Uſe mildneſs of ſpeech, and meekneſs of behaviour.

Theſe rules partly regard our own ſafety, and partly the beſt way of obtaining the end aimed at. For, as every good man ought to have a zeal for the happineſs of others, and particularly for promoting truth and virtue; ſo it is a point of prudence to purſue ſuch good ends in the uſe of thoſe means, which are moſt likely to obtain them, and with as little danger or damage to ourſelves as may be.

The *firſt* is a rule delivered by our Saviour: *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.* There is a rule of like import in the Proverbs: *Speak not in the ear of a fool: for he will deſpiſe the wiſdom of thy words.* This too is partly the deſign of that direction which St. *Paul* gives to *Timothy*: Deſcribing ſome men, that they had a *form of Godlineſs, denying the power of it*; *from ſuch*, ſays he, *turn away.* Leave them, as men whom you have no proſpect of doing any good to. Our Lord himſelf

Matth. vii. 6.

Prov. xxiii. 9.

2 Tim. iii. 5.

himſelf obſerved this rule, for he rarely addreſſed directly to the Phariſees, but rather taught the people. And his diſciples afterwards having made a tender of the Goſpel to the Jews, when they rejected it, went from them to the Gentils. *Uſefulneſs.* Acts xiii. 46.

The true character of thoſe men who are not the ſubjects of inſtruction is, that they *truſt in themſelves, that they are righteous, and deſpiſe others.* Again: *Their heart is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed; leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and ſhould be converted and healed.* Luke xviii. 9. Matt. xiii. 15.

Theſe are not to be inſtructed. Nor would they admit a direct addreſs and application to be made to them. You may warn others againſt them, you may weep over them, you may pray for them, but you can't teach them. 'Tis a dangerous thing to offer them any ſervice to enlighten them. If they are not under ſome external reſtraints, *they turn again and rent you.* If therefore upon trial you meet with men of this character and diſpoſition, you are to retreat as well as you can. The moſt that can be thought of is to wait for a better opportunity.

However,

Uſefulneſs.

However, our bleſſed Lord gives this charge to his diſciples: *What I tell you in darkneſs, that ſpeak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the houſe top.* Proclaim the doctrine you have heard from me publicly where ever you go, and do all that lyes in your power to recommend it to all men. And it muſt be owned, that they who have an opportunity of applying to great numbers of men, either by diſcourſe or writing, have a vaſt advantage; and they are bound by their fidelity to Chriſt, and by all that's dear and ſacred in truth, religion and virtue, to emprove this advantage to the utmoſt of their ability. If they ſcatter abroad the principles of religion, ſome will fall upon good ground, whence may be expected a plentiful harveſt.

Matth. x. 27.

The *Second* rule relating to this matter is, *If they perſecute you in one city, flee into another.* You may decline the heat of mens rage and diſpleaſure, and reſerve yourſelves for better times, or for more teachable and better diſpoſed perſons. Of the firſt believers after our Lord's aſcenſion 'tis ſaid: *And at that time there was a great perſecution againſt the church that was at Jeruſalem, and they were all ſcattered abroad thro' out*

Matth. x. 23.

Acts viii. 1.

out the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles. 'Tis likely, the apoſtles had ſome ſpecial directions from the Holy Ghoſt, not to depart from Jeruſalem, and they there enjoyed accordingly a ſpecial protection. But the reſt of the believers left Jeruſalem for the preſent, and ſhifted for themſelves, as they could, in other parts. Nay we afterwards find apoſtles alſo obſerving this rule. Peter having been delivered out of priſon by an angel, after he had been put in cuſtody by Herod, *departed, and went to another place.* Of Paul and Barnabas it is related, that when at Iconium *there was an aſſault made both of the Gentils, and alſo of the Jews, to uſe them deſpitefully, they were aware of it, and fled unto Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lyes round about.* Acts xii. 17. Acts xiv. 5, 6.

Uſefulneſs.

Thirdly, teach men as they are able to bear it. So did our bleſſed Lord. Says the Evangeliſt: *And with many ſuch parables ſpake he the word unto them, as they are able to hear it.* So he taught the diſciples alſo, delivering ſome things with ſome obſcurity, becauſe they were not able to bear a plain and full revelation of them: *I* Mark iv. 33.

Uſefulneſs. *have yet many things to ſay unto you, but ye*
John. xvi. 12. *cannot bear them now.* This may be the fault of men, that they are not able to hear every truth plainly ſpoken: But yet there muſt be ſome compliance and condeſcention in this reſpect. *And I, brethren,* ſays
1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. St. *Paul* to the Corinthians, *could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Chriſt Jeſus. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.* You
1 Cor. ix. 22. muſt therefore, as the apoſtles did, *become all things to all men, that by all means you may ſave ſome.* You are not to depart from your own integrity, nor your proper character: but ſo far as can be done conſiſtent with theſe, you are to ſuit your inſtructions to mens abilities and conditions.

Fourthly, in this work uſe great mildneſs of ſpeech, and meekneſs of behaviour. You are not to provoke any that are teachable by reflecting on their want of underſtanding, not to ſuffer your zeal to degenerate into rudeneſs. It has been obſerved by ſome, that the apoſtles of Chriſt were eminent examples of an excellent decorum in their diſcourſes, and in their whole behaviour. And among other directions

to

to *Timothy* St. *Paul* has not failed to recommend particularly meekness of behaviour, as the most likely method of reclaiming men from their errours. *The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth.* That you may gain men to truth and virtue, apply the strongest arguments to their reason and conscience, without a contemptuous treatment of their persons or prejudices. *Usefulness.* 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

These gentle methods of reformation will be generally preferred by good men, and may be reckoned the most probable means of conviction: But I don't deny, that some faults and follies of men may fitly be ridiculed; and some men may be *rebuked sharply* by proper persons, *and with all authority.* All which is no more than putting in practise the direction of *Solomon: Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he wise in his own conceit.* Tit. i. 13. ch, ii. 15. Prov. xxvi. 5.

I have now set before you some general rules of prudence, and some particular directions concerning divers branches *Conclusion.*

Concluſion. of conduct. But you are not to ſuppoſe, that prudence is to be learned by rules only. It is rather a habit, which muſt be gained by obſervation, action and experience. Suffer not yourſelves to be embarraſſed and perplexed with a great multitude and variety of rules, nor be over ſollicitous above a proper decorum. For too great anxiety always ſpoils the performance. In a word, be but fully maſter of your own character, and poſſeſſed of an habitual deſire of pleaſing, together with a modeſt perſwaſion, that you ſhall do well, and you will do ſo.

There can be no occaſion for me to add a particular recommendation of the ſtudie of prudence, having before ſhewn the neceſſity, and the grounds and reaſons of it. The Text itſelf demonſtrates the lawfulneſs and expedience of prudent conduct. Nor can any be altogether inſenſible of the importance of it to ſucceſs in life. Virtue, learning, the knowledge of arts and ſciences, are like diamonds, that have an intrinſic value, but muſt be ſet and poliſhed, before they are fit for ſhow or uſe. Tho' divers other natural and acquired accompliſhments may procure affection and eſteem,

eſteem, 'tis diſcretion only that can preſerve them. *Concluſion.*

I am not apprehenſive of any abuſe of the directions here laid down. They have no tendence to make men ſelfiſh or cunning. They are deſigned for the young and unexperienced; as likewiſe for the honeſt, the good-natured, and the generous, of any age and condition. Though you ſhould be ſimple, they who are deſigning will practiſe their arts of ſubtlety and miſchief. By a prudent behaviour you will not encourage their evil practiſes, but only ſecure yourſelves againſt them, and be better qualified for ſucceſs and uſefulneſs in the world.

After all, you are not to depend upon your own care and prudence, but to recommend yourſelves and your honeſt well-laid deſigns to the divine protection and bleſſing. It has been ſeen by thoſe who have diligently obſerved human counſels and events, *that the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, neither yet bread to the wiſe, nor yet riches to men of underſtanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.* As all human affairs are liable Eccl. ix. 11.

to

Concluſion. to accidents and diſaſters, a firm perſwaſion, and ſerious regard to the over-ruling providence of God, which is not limited by the preſent ſcene of things, can't but contribute to your happineſs, by preparing your mind for all events, and enabling you to bear afflictions and diſappointments with patience.

It may likewiſe be one good foundation of happineſs, to admit but moderate affections for the great things of this world. If you are truly religious, you may be content with a little, and will manage that well. Without a great eſtate, by frugal and prudent conduct you may have enough for yourſelves, and your immediate dependents, and be able to do good to others alſo. Happy had it been for ſome men, as well as for the public, if from the very firſt, and all their days, they had rather aimed to be wiſe and good, than rich or great! Finally, if you do good for the ſake of doing good, which is a noble principle; and with a view to future rewards, which are incomparably great, and certain: you will not be much concerned, though you miſs of preſent rewards;

wards; which you know to be but trifles, and never were your principal aim. *Concluſion.*

May you then add to virtue prudence, and abound in both yet more and more; that you may eſcape the ſnares of the wicked, and the miſapprehenſions of the weak; may have ſucceſs in buſineſs, acceptance with mankind, happineſs in friendſhip and every private relation; may be uſeful members of civil ſociety, and of the church of God; may enjoy contentment, and peace of mind, in all events: and at length obtain the diſtinguiſhed recompenſes, which God, who is infinitely wiſe and holy, will beſtow upon thoſe, who have not only been *undefiled in the way*, but have alſo advanced the welfare of their fellow-creatures, and the honour of his name in the world. Pſ. cxix. 1.

The E N D.

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A

CAUTION

AGAINST

CONFORMITY to this World:

TWO

DISCOURSES

ON

ROMANS xii. 2.

By NATHANIEL LARDNER.

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DISCOURSE I.

ROM. xii. 2.

And be not conformed to this world.

THIS chapter contains directions to the practiſe of many virtues. It begins with exhortations of a general nature, recommended with great earneſtneſſe: *I beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reaſonable ſervice. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* In the remaining part of the chapter are recommended to Chriſtians divers virtues; ſuch as humility, faithfulneſſe and diligence in the emprovement of their talents, and in the diſcharge of the duties of their ſeveral ſtations, undiſſembled love of

each other, patience under afflictions, a love of peace, forbearance of enemies, and even kindneſſe to them, if they are in diſtreſſe.

My preſent deſign is to conſider the cautionarie direction of the text: *And be not conformed to this world.* By the *world*, as you well know, in the New Teſtament, and in common diſcourſe, is often meant this preſent ſtate, and the things of it. It likewiſe ſometimes denotes the ſinful cuſtoms and practiſes of men, who live in this world; or the bad men of the world, who live according to the luſts of the fleſh, and as if they looked for no other happineſſe, but what conſiſts in the poſſeſſions and enjoyments of this world. And ſo generally had men abandoned themſelves to ſin and folly, that Satan is ſpoken of as the *God of this world:* as if he had been the deity, they acknowledged and worſhiped.

2 Cor. iv. 4.

Indeed before the coming of Chriſt, and the publication of his goſpel, human nature lay in a very deplorable and degenerate condition, being generally involved in great darkneſſe and ignorance, and under the power of irregular and exorbitant appetites

and

and affections: little virtue, either in the Heathen or the Jewiſh world: things contrarie to reaſon practiſed by men of every rank: the very principles of the guides and inſtructors of men too much ſuited to extenuate vice, or too weak to check the torrent of it; and often recommending little elſe but a bare performance of external acts of religion, without, and in the ſtead of real virtue and true piety.

The apoſtle therefore now writing to the Chriſtians at Rome judged it neceſſarie at the begining of his practical directions to caution them againſt being carryed away with the ſtream of irreligion and wickedneſſe. And it is to be feared, that ſtill there may be reaſon for ſuch a caution. The goſpel may have made ſome conſiderable alteration in the world. Yea, it ought to be owned, that the world has been greatly reformed and amended thereby. It has bleſſed many with juſter ſentiments concerning God and the way of ſerving him. It has alſo had a good effect upon the manners of men; and many have been influenced by the good principles they have received. Great numbers have been pre-

ſerved from ſins, they otherwiſe would not have eſcaped. And others have reached to degrees of virtue, which they never would have attained without it's aſſiſtance. And the number of truly good and upright men is not ſo ſmall as formerly; but, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, much enlarged and encreaſed.

Nevertheleſs there are many, whoſe lives are not agreeable to the rules of right reaſon, or the precepts of the Chriſtian Religion. And though it ſhould be allowed, or charitably ſuppoſed and hoped, that they are not now the moſt, who act contrarie to the precepts of religion; yet a caution, *not to be conformed to the world*, may not be uſeleſs or needleſs. If there are but few, who act as men of the world, and are principally influenced by the things of this preſent life: yet conſidering the deceitfulneſſe of our hearts, the biaſſe of inclination to ſome ſins, and the force of only a few bad examples; (eſpecially, where there are many;) it may be reaſonable to guard againſt imitation of them, or conformity to others in that which is evil.

In

In diſcourſing on this text I ſhall take the following method:

I. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew the deſign and meaning of this direction.

II. I intend to conſider the importance of obſerving it, and offer ſome reaſons and arguments againſt conformity to this world.

III. After which, I ſhall conclude with a few reflections.

I. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew the deſign and meaning of this direction.

And hereby is not to be underſtood, that we are ſtudiouſly to avoid all conformity and agreement with men of the world. We all agree in one common nature, and perform the ordinarie functions and operations of the animal and rational life. And we are to provide for the wants and neceſſities of nature, as well as other men. Nor does the apoſtle deſign to reſtrain or forbid a diligent purſuit of the comforts and advantages of this life, in any methods that

are lawful and innocent: But what he means is, that we ſhould not be led aſide by multitudes, or by any of thoſe we converſe with, into the practiſe of any thing ſinful and unlawful.

But beſide this general explication of the words, I would mention ſome particulars, in which we ought not to be conformed to others, how much ſoever ſuch things may prevail.

1. We are not to be conformed to the world in thoſe ſins, which are called *ſins of the fleſh*. In this caution the apoſtle very probably has an eye to theſe things, inaſmuch as they were very generally indulged among the Heathens, by whom the Chriſtians at Rome were ſurrounded. So he writes to the Epheſians: *This I ſay therefore, and teſtify in the Lord; that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentils walk, in the vanity of their minds, having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſſe of their heart: who being paſt feeling have given themſelves over to laſciviouſneſſe, to work all uncleanneſſe with greedineſſe. But ye have not ſo learned*

Eph. iv. 17—22.

learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. He requires, that such things be *not once named* among Christians; that is, that there be no instances of such transgressions among them: but that they behave, *as becometh saints; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.* He likewise directs, that *foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient*, should quite cease from among them.

Eph. v. 3. *ver.* 11. *ver.* 4.

Nor are we to indulge ourselves in any intemperance or excesse, that disorders the reason, prejudices the health, and indispose for the duties of life. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excesse.* We are not to be guilty of complyance here. Though some should take it ever so much amiss, that we will not be like them, or bear them companie therein, we are resolutely to decline a conformity with them. Thus St. Peter, referring to the prevailing customs of Heathens: *For the time past of our life*

Eph. v. 18. 1 *Pet.* iv. 3, 4.

life may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentils, when we walked in laſciviouſneſſe, exceſſe of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it ſtrange, that you run not with them to the ſame exceſſe of riot, ſpeaking evil of you. So it was then. And it is to be feared, that ſtill among ſome, and in ſome places, this kind of exceſſe is ſo common, that not a few may be tempted by the cuſtomarineſſe of it.

2. Chriſtians are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in any *injuſtice, either in the way of fraud or violence.* *Eph.* iv. 28. Says St. Paul to the Epheſians: *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good.* Among the ancient lawes of God delivered to the Iſraelites are ſuch *Lev.* xix. 35, 36. as theſe: *Ye ſhall do no unrighteouſneſſe in judgement, in mete-yard, in weight, or in meaſure. Juſt balances, juſt weights, a juſt ephah, a juſt hin ſhall ye have. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of* *Prov.* xi. 1. *the land of Egypt.* Solomon obſerves: *A falſe balance is abomination to the Lord. But a juſt weight is his delight.* And God himſelf

ſelf by his prophet reproves prevailing injuſtice in this manner: *Are there yet the treaſures of wickedneſſe in the houſe of the wicked, and the ſcant meaſure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?* Mic. vi. 10, 11. Chriſtians then certainly ought to be fair and open in their dealings, and to do to every man what is juſt. Though we could unobſerved detain what is rightfully due to any, we ſhould not withhold it. We are not only to decline unreputable methods of gain, which all men would condemn, and cry out of; but every artifice that is unjuſt and unequal, however common with ſome, and ſecure from the cognizance of human lawes. We ſhould be willing to exert ourſelves to ſecure to others their rightful poſſeſſions againſt unjuſt invaders; but ſhould never employ our power, or art, or influence, for geting into our hands what belongs to others. Though a good man does not chooſe to be oppreſſed, and would uſe all proper meaſures to ſecure himſelf from wrong; yet he would much rather ſuffer, than do an injurie. To be wronged of his poſſeſſions, or rightful inheritance,

heritance, by the artifices of deſigning perſons, might be matter of much grief and concern: but to treat others in ſuch a way never enters into his heart. Nor would any conſideration whatever prove a temptation to ſuch fraudulent proceeding. He would rather loſe what he has, than gain the greateſt eſtate by an act of injuſtice.

3. Chriſtians are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in the practiſe of *known falſhood.* It is one of St. Paul's practical directions to the Epheſians: *Therefore, putting away lying, ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour. For we are members one of another.* The words we uſe are to expreſs the ſenſe of our minds. We are not to promiſe any thing, but what we intend to do. And when we have promiſed, we are to perform according to our engagements. Nor does it ſeem conſiſtent with truth and ſincerity to make pompous profeſſions of affection, reſpect and eſteem, beſide, and beyond the ſenſe of our minds: creating thereby vain dependences, and big expectations; for our own preſent intereſt poſſibly, but to the real detriment, and laſting and piercing vexation and diſappointment

Eph. iv. 25.

pointment of thoſe who have been deceived by us. A Chriſtian alſo, one would think, ſhould reckon it incumbent on him to have a regard to truth in leſſer, as well as in greater matters. However cuſtomarie it may be with ſome people to be at the ſame time at home to ſome, and abroad to others, and to direct their attendents to deliver a known falſhood, and to perſiſt in it: a man of honour and conſcience will ſcarce encourage, or approve a practiſe, which is a breach upon ſincerity, and may have pernicious conſequences.

I need not add here, that if we are not to tranſgreſs the rules of veracity in our ordinarie diſcourſe and converſation, much leſs may we falſify upon ſolemn occaſions: when, beſide the weight of our own credit, we call God to be witneſſe to the truth of what we ſay.

4. We are not to conform to the world, and the men of it, in *a profane uſe of the name of God.* Reverence is always due to the ſupreme being: in which they appear to be defective, who upon trivial occaſions appeal to God for the truth of what they ſay. If any ſhould inſiſt, that they do it ſometimes

ſometimes without knowing they do ſo, or thinking of it: they only ſhew thereby, that they have been long habituated to a practiſe, which is not to be juſtifyed. For, is it not an offenſe, to atteſt inſignificant points with an oath? which is a ſolemn and awful thing, not to be introduced into ſociety, but for deciding matters of weight and importance. A ſober and conſiderate Heathen, or Deiſt, who has upon his mind a ſerious ſenſe of religion, would not approve that the divine being ſhould be mentioned, or ſpoken of in ſuch a light and irreverent manner, as would be judged a contemptuous uſe of the name of a great man. And ſhall Chriſtians venture upon ſuch an uſe of the name of God, who have ſo much more reaſon to love and honour him! Is it not ſtrange and ſurpriſing, that a ſin, to which, as is often ſayd, there is ſo little temptation, ſhould be ſo common, as it is, among thoſe who are called by that honourable name! But however common it may be among ſome, chiefly, I think, of the higher and lower ranks of men; (in which, as well as in ſome other

other things, they too much agree;) let us not be conformed to them therein.

Nor can it be fit for us to stake *our salvation*, or *life*, or *credit*, for the truth of matters of little or no consequence, as some frequently do. This is a practise, that is not to be reconciled to the reason of any thoughtful and considerate person, who has a sense of religious obligations, and is concerned for the good order and welfare of society. And our blessed Lord has interposed here, and has expressly forbid not only the swearing by the name of God in conversation, and the ordinarie commerce of life, but also those lesser, or more diminutive oaths, in which the name of God is not expressly invoked. *Ye have heard, that it has been said by*, [or, rather *to*] *them of old time: Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you: Swear not at all:* Our Saviour does not intend to forbid swearing upon solemn and momentous, but only upon trivial and ordinarie occasions: *neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king.* Mat. v. 33, 34.

Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, for thou canſt not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay: for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil. Theſe directions of our Lord are ſufficiently clear, and eaſie to be applyed by men of theſe times.

It is unneceſſarie to add, that if invocations of the Deity in a light manner, and upon trivial occaſions, be evil; it is ſtill a more aggravated offenſe to call upon God to condemn or deſtroy others upon occaſion of none, or very trifling affronts and injuries.

5. We are not to be conformed to the world in *idleneſſe and miſpending of time.* Though it ſhould be the cuſtom of ſome, or of many around us, to devote their time and abilities to trifling matters, of little or no uſe and benefit to themſelves, or others; they are not to be followed or imitated by us. Diverſions are allowable, if they are innocent in themſelves, and if they are made uſe of by us as a refreſhment of our wearied ſpirits, and that we may be better fitted for employments of a higher nature. But diverſions are not to be ſuffered to grow up into

into constant employments, and to thrust out useful and necessarie businesse. Then they become sinful. For this life is our only opportunity of providing for eternity: and therefore it would be lost, if spent in eating and drinking, and playing, without making preparation for a future state. If we rightly consider the shortnesse of life, the work we have to do, the many avocations that are almost unavoidable; we shall think, that time ought not to be squandered and thrown away, but emproved with care and diligence.

A large part of most mens time is requisite for providing the necessaries, or comforts and conveniences of life. If they should indulge sloth and idlenesse, they would be reduced to want and poverty. If the necessaries and comforts of life are provided to our hand for us, we may be well employed in emproving our minds, and in serving and helping others.

And do we think, that we have no occasion to employ some time in private, in serious meditation and reflection upon ourselves, and our more public and ordinarie conduct? Are we satisfyed, that all is right

already, and that our behaviour is without fault, or that there is no room left for amendment? May it not be of uſe to take ſome time to review our diverſions and amuſements, our tranſactions in buſineſſe, and even our acts of public worſhip?

Time very often runs waſte in converſation, and yet we ought not to be unſociable and unfriendly. Should we not therefore be glad to render that time more profitable? As for thoſe who have ſuperior abilities, or any ſuperior advantage in point of age, character and ſtation: May they not do well to aim at raiſing and emproving friendly converſation? And ſhould not others be ready to join in ſuch attempts, and to ſet forward thoſe topics that are inſtructive and edifying, as well as entertaining? that thoſe ſeaſons may not be altogether, and always, void and empty ſpaces, of which we can give no good account, but uſeful and beneficial; ſuch as all may be able to reflect upon with pleaſure, and ſome with thankfulneſſe, long afterwards.

6. We are not to be conformed to the world in *a cenſorious temper, and detracting ſpeech and diſcourſe.* Some there are, who ſcarce

ſcarce think any thing well done, but what is done by themſelves: who have a mean opinion of the abilities and performances of other men, or ſeem to have ſo. And by artfully leſſening and detracting from them they endeavour to bring the reſt of mankind into the like ſentiment.

Some men have a vaſt acquaintance with the private affairs and actions of their neighbours, but more eſpecially, as it ſeems, with their weakneſſes and failings. And having a good deal of knowledge of this kind, it is not eaſie for them to hide ſuch a treaſure. Men who have a great deal of knowledge are uſually fond of ſhewing it, and ſometimes even among thoſe, who ſet no value upon the ſciences they are maſters of. But men are apt to be communicative of this knowledge above any other, becauſe diſcoveries of this ſort are generally acceptable; the ſmalleſt trifles of this nature being more eagerly ſought, and more readily embraced by abundance of people, than relations of great and noble actions.

There can be no good reaſon, why men ſhould be prying and inquiſitive into the

private affairs of families, or particular perſons. When ſuch things are known, there can be very ſeldom any good purpoſe ſerved by divulging them. If they are mentioned at all, certainly there can be no good reaſon for giving them a wrong turn, making things appear worſe than they are, concealing circumſtances, that might alleviate an imprudence; and poſſibly adding ſome others, that tend to aggravate and enhance it.

This muſt be owned to be an unreaſonable practiſe. But yet it is not uncommon. Though every man is tender of his own good name, how many act, as if the reputation of other men and their families was a thing of ſmall value in their eſteem!

We are therefore to be upon our guard here. We are not to form and raiſe ſtories to the prejudice of others. Nor are we to report what we have heard without reſerve, or caution, or any good occaſion for ſo doing. Nay, it might be well, if ſometimes we would decline receiving relations of this kind, that the practiſe of tale-bearing may be the more effectually diſcouraged. Or,

if

if we can't well avoid hearing them, however doing it without any satisfaction, real or apparent, and diverting the discourse to other matters, as soon as may be.

If we do not arrive at this degree of perfection, yet let us take heed, that we be not rash and severe in our censures, nor condemn and exclaim against actions and conduct, of which we know but very few circumstances.

We are all too apt to transgress in many things, and in few things more, than in an abuse of the faculty of speech. Says St. James: *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing, that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body.* Jam. iii. 1, 2.

I might here particularly caution and argue against loading men with censures and reproaches on account of their differing from us in matters of speculation. For whereas upon other occasions some turn the imprudences of others into heinous sins, here men often make that a crime which is a virtue. They censure men as

abandoned of God, and in a ſtate of damnation, for believing certain opinions, which poſſibly are true and reaſonable. But if they be falſe, ſtill thoſe perſons would not deſerve to be ſeverely cenſured by us, if they have honeſtly uſed their beſt endeavours in the ſearch of truth. Let us not be conformed to others in ſuch a temper and conduct as this. But when men differ from us, let us take the more favourable ſide of the queſtion; and hope, that though they are miſtaken, as we think, yet they do not err wilfully, or obſtinatly, but that they are open to conviction, and are ſincere and upright. But at preſent I ſay no more of this matter. **

7. We are not to be conformed to this world, or the men of it, in *a luxurious and extravagant courſe of life.* And, have we not reaſon to be upon our guard here? Is not this a prevailing and general fault? Has it not invaded all ranks and orders of men? Is not this one of the ſins of our days? and does it not manifeſtly bring upon us many diſ-

** *If any ſhould find this diſcourſe too long for one reading, they may break off here.*

distresses and calamities, and threaten us with more? Does not extravagance prevail, not in one thing only, but in all? Is it not seen in diet, apparel, furniture, equipage, diversions, and in every article of expense that can be named?

What can be said in defense of that ††gaming, in various forms, which has been so greatly improved and cultivated, in which great numbers of people have attained such exquisite skill and understanding? Is not this the ordinarie diversion, or rather business of many among us; of rich and poor, high and low, young and old? Are there not numerous instances of this practise, which are plainly, and extremely unreasonable? Certainly, it cannot but be offensive to see those gaming for sums of money, be they greater or smaller, who, so far as can be judged by their outward appearance, are extremely destitute. And it must be a manifest and heinous immorality, for men to mispend time, and ha-

†† Since these discourses were composed and pronounced, an *Act* of Parliament has passed *for the more effectual preventing of excessive and deceitful gaming*. All wise men, I am perswaded, agree in wishing it may have a good effect.

zard ſums of money in this way, whoſe families are unprovided of things neceſſarie for their ſupport.

If then tranſgreſſions of this kind are common with any of our rank and acquaintance, we ought to be upon our guard, and take heed that we be not conformed to them. For gaming is altogether improper for ſome. And to be addicted to it, or to hazard large ſums of money this way, muſt be unreaſonable in all. The loſſe of time, hazard of eſtate, health, temper, virtue, with which this practiſe is attended, ſhould either entirely deter men from it, or at leſt induce them to be very careful not to exceed.

But this is not the only thing to be avoided by us. There are many other ways of profuſeneſſe. And, when this is the caſe: When frugality is unreputable; when economie is thought to be below all people of rank, of both ſexes; when they who make a decent appearance, and pay to all what is juſtly due to them, and relieve and ſupport diſtreſſed families, and are liberal in promoting divers good works: when ſuch as theſe can ſcarce maintain

their

their credit in the world, for want of pomp and ſplendour, and a glittering ſhew and appearance; then certainly we have need to be upon our guard againſt that profuſeneſſe, which is above our circumſtances, which might exhauſt our ſubſtance, involve us in perplexing and inextricable difficulties, and hazard the total loſſe of that little virtue that remains in us.

8. Another thing, in which we ought not to be conformed to this world, is *uncharitableneſſe in things of a religious concern.* This we may have reaſon to guard againſt. For the pride of our hearts, the good opinion we are too apt to have of ourſelves, diſpoſes us very much to be offended with thoſe who differ from us. Therefore, if unfavourable ſentiments of ſome perſons, and a ſevere treatment of them, be common, we are in great danger of being miſled. Indeed this has often been a common, though it be an heinous injuſtice. It has been common among thoſe who have been the people of God by profeſſion, as well as among ignorant Heathens and idolaters. How ſtrangely a blind zeal, or uncharitable temper toward ſuch as dif-

fered from them, raged among the Jewiſh people, we ſee in the hiſtorie of the New Teſtament; particularly in their treatment of the apoſtle Paul, and other harmleſs diſciples and followers of Jeſus Chriſt. If we were to look into the hiſtorie of Chriſtianity, ſince it prevailed in the Roman empire, and obſerve the conduct of the ſeveral ſects and parties of Chriſtians; we ſhould find it a difficult undertaking to vindicate the conduct of any one of them, when they have been uppermoſt, and have had power in their hands. Scarce any age or period, but affords inſtances of hard and unrighteous treatment of men for the ſake of ſome differences in religious opinions. Very few of thoſe who have had the chief direction of church-affairs, who have not been blamable for ſome rigour and uncharitableneſſe in ſentiment or practiſe. And oftentimes they who by their ſtations have been guides and teachers of others have earneſtly inculcated ſuch a zeal, ſuch a temper and conduct toward thoſe who have not been in all things of the ſame mind with them, as is extremely unrighteous and unmerciful. Nor are they thoſe only who

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are chief in power that are guilty in this reſpect. For they alſo who are few in number, and of ſmall authority, in compariſon of others, will ſometimes aſſume, and become imperious and uncharitable toward thoſe who differ from them in theſe points.

This then is a very common fault. And becauſe common, the greater care and circumſpection are neceſſarie. For every one has a right to think for himſelf, and is obliged to determine according to the beſt of his own judgement and underſtanding. And it is a duty incumbent upon every one to enquire ſeriouſly into the things of religion, and to judge according to evidence. Therefore no man, or body of men, civil or eccleſiaſtical, can have a right to impoſe religious creeds or articles upon other men, and to puniſh them for not aſſenting to them. Any one may propoſe reaſons and arguments in behalf of his opinions: But no man ought to enforce aſſent any farther than his arguments convince.

It is true, no one has a right to do, or teach any thing, that is contrarie to the peace of ſociety. That is the magiſtrate's province.

province. But where opinions are innocent, and have no direct tendence to diſturb the peace and quiet of others, and men are guilty of no injuſtice, they have a right to the protection of the power of the ſociety in which they live, and ought to enjoy the privileges of peaceable ſubjects.

And that we ought to avoid a perſecuting, and a malevolent temper and conduct with regard to men of different ſentiments, and to practiſe much tenderneſſe, mildneſſe, forbearance and love, is apparent not only from the reaſon and fitneſſe of things, as juſt now hinted, but alſo from the conduct and example of our Bleſſed Lord and his apoſtles, and from the mildneſſe of the principles and precepts of the Chriſtian religion, as recorded in the books of the New Teſtament; which was not planted and ſpread in the world by force and violence, by human authority, and the power of the ſword, but by reaſon and argument, and the example of a holy and amiable life and converſation. Moreover, the Chriſtian religion did by the like means ſpread and prevail for a good while after the death of Chriſt's apoſtles, and their fellow-labourers, without human ſupports, and notwithſtanding frequent

frequent and violent perſecutions. And though the favour of the civil power and authority, upon the converſion of Conſtantin, might be an advantage for a while: yet I ſuppoſe, it may be allowed to be a juſt obſervation, that ſince Chriſtians, inſtead of being perſecuted, as they had been by Jews and Heathens, have perſecuted one another, Chriſtianity has made little progreſſe, but has rather loſt ground. For the once numerous and flouriſhing churches of the Eaſt, and in a large part of Africa, have been all, in a manner, long ſince ſwallowed up in Mahometaniſm. And I preſume, it may much diſpoſe us to moderation to obſerve, that where there is the moſt rigid impoſition, and tyrannical government, as in the church of Rome, there are the groſſeſt errours, and the moſt unreaſonable ſuperſtitions, together with a very deplorable corruption of manners, eſpecially where that eccleſiaſtical tyrannie is at the greateſt height.

Let us not then be afraid of religious liberty, as prejudicial and unfriendly to truth. Let us not by any means concur in any methods of rigour and ſeverity toward men

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of different ſentiments, as thinking thereby to promote the intereſt of religion and virtue. For beſide that ſuch methods are in themſelves unreaſonable and unrighteous, they are alſo detrimental to the cauſe of truth.

9. Another thing, in which we ought not to follow others, is *indifference about the things of religion.* Of this men may be in danger on various accounts. Conſidering the many differences and diſſenſions, there are upon this head; the animoſity and fierceneſſe with which religious diſputes are often managed; the many abuſes of religion, that is, it's name and profeſſion, by hypocritical, artful and ſelf-intereſted men; ſome may be apt to take offenſe, and to determine, no more to concern themſelves about it, but let all things abroad have their courſe; whilſt they, for their part, ſecure, as far as poſſible, their own preſent worldly eaſe and advantage.

Others may be in danger of much indolence upon this head from other conſiderations. Religion, ſay they, is an abſtruſe and difficult thing. Let us therefore acquieſce in the determinations of our ſuperiors and governours in church and ſtate, and believe as they require. Or, let us follow

follow thoſe to whom we are allyed, and do as they deſire, eſpecially if they are at all importunate, without giving ourſelves any pain about this matter.

But this indifference and indolence ought to be guarded againſt. Whatever diſſenſions there are in the world, partly through human weakneſſe, partly through human wickedneſſe and deceit, there is a difference of things. Truth and virtue are realities, built upon ſolid foundations. And with care and attention the great and general principles of true religion, and the main branches of virtue, may be diſcerned from errour and vice.

Every man therefore ſhould endeavour, to the beſt of his power, according to the circumſtances he is in, to know and underſtand the chief things of religion, and the grounds and evidences of them. He ſhould be diſpoſed to profeſs the truth ſo far as he is acquainted with it, and to appear among thoſe, who make a public acknowledgement of the great creator and ſovereign of the world, and of that revelation, which he has made of his will to mankind. He ſhould be concerned for the rights of conſcience

ſcience in general, and be heartily deſirous, that all men may enjoy the privilege of worſhiping God according to their light and knowledge. He ſhould never joyn in oppreſſing others for conſcience ſake: but according to his ſtation and circumſtances ſhould oppoſe ſuch meaſures, and vindicate thoſe who are any way injuriouſly treated on account of their religious ſentiments.

10. and laſtly, We are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in *an exceſſive and inordinate affection for earthly and temporal things.* We are not to act, as if this world were our home, and the things of it our portion, and our all. We ſhould be more moderate in our deſires of temporal good things, and leſs afraid of the evils and ſufferings of this life, than many are. If ſome ſeek the things of this world, more than thoſe of another; and, if diſappointments in ſuch purſuits plunge them into incurable grief and diſtreſſe; we ſhould be cautious of ſuch intemperate affection for earthly things. If ſome are unreaſonably tranſported with ſucceſſes in their worldly deſigns, and are elated thereby beyond meaſure, ſo as to treat others

others with ſcorn and diſdain; we ſhould be aſhamed of ſuch miſbehaviour. If we are bleſſed in like manner, let us thankfully own the goodneſſe of God; but *rejoyce as though we rejoyced not, becauſe the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* Do many repine, and murmur againſt God, becauſe they are not proſpered, as ſome others are? and is there among men a general uneaſineſſe with their own circumſtances? We ſhould be contented and reſigned; that it may appear, we acknowledge the over-ruling providence of God, and that there are other ſources of joy and ſatisfaction, beſide encreaſe and abundance of worldly goods. Whatever condition we are in, eſpecially if we are in any higher ſtation, let us not *ſeek our own* intereſt only, as too many do, *but every one* of us alſo *another's wealth.*

1 *Cor.* vii. 30, 31.

—x. 24.

In theſe things we are not to follow, or imitate other men; nor in any thing elſe, that is diſhonourable to the majeſty of God, or that debaſeth, and is unworthie of our rational and immortal nature, or that is injurious to our fellow-creatures. In other

things, which are not contrarie to reaſon, or expreſs revelation, we may do as others do: We may enjoy the ſame comforts, follow the ſame employments, take the ſame diverſions, that others do; and may uſe the language of the place and countrey and time, wherein we live. For I do not intend to caſt a ſnare before you, or raiſe groundleſs and needleſs ſcruples in any man's mind. It is not my deſign abſolutely to condemn muſic, or danſing, or thoſe diverſions, in which chance, or hazard, has a part, as well as ſkill; or thoſe entertainments, in which are repreſented the humours and manners of men, and the revolutions of ſtates and empires, or the viciſſitudes of particular perſons. Theſe things I do not look upon, as in themſelves, and always evil. They then only become evil, when they are perverted, or abuſed; (as I fear they often are;) or when they are accidentally evil, or hurtful to us, for want of prudent circumſpection; which is neceſſarie every where, and at all times, and more eſpecially upon ſome occaſions.

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But then the reſtrictions and cautions before-mentioned ought to be here remembered. Men are not to waſte their time, or their ſubſtance, in diverſions and amuſements. They ought not to hazard any large part of their ſubſtance, the loſſe of which might be any conſiderable inconvenience to them. They ſhould decline ſuch games, as greatly engage them, and too much raiſe their paſſions. Men may do well to take heed, that no amuſements rob them of their wiſdom, or their ſeriouſneſſe, or their importance in life. If any indecence appears in the entertainments ſet before them, they ought to deteſt and reſent it, to ſhew their diſlike and abhorrence of it, and to diſcountenance it in the way beſt ſuited to their ſtation and character. We ought ever to be careful to avoid familiarity with the wicked. And it ſhould be eſteemed a point of prudence rarely to be neglected, eſpecially by young perſons, not to venture alone, where there is any danger, but to ſecure to themſelves the companie of ſome ſober and religious aſſociates; whoſe preſence may keep off

ſome temptations, or give a check to them.

It is almoſt needleſs for me to add, that I do not underſtand, or explain this text, as regulating mens outward garb. A good man may without ſcruple follow the faſhion of his countrey, and the habit of others about him, of the like rank and ſtation in the world. St. Peter indeed gives ſuch directions as theſe to women, eſpeci-
1 *Pet.* iii. 3. ally the married: *Whoſe adorning let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel. But let it be the hiden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price.* But it is eaſie to perceive, that what this apoſtle intends hereby is, that ſuch ſhould eſteem the ornaments of the mind above thoſe of the body, and be more concerned about that which is inward, than that which is outward. God declares to the Jews by the prophet Hoſea:
Hoſ. vi. 6. *I deſired mercie, and not ſacrifice.* But no one underſtands thereby, that God had not deſired ſacrifice at all, but that he preferred

ferred mercie above ſacrifice, or deſired the one more than the other: as appears alſo from what immediatly follows: *and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings:* So likewiſe our Lord ſays: *Lay not up to yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt. But lay up to yourſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal.* He does not abſolutly forbid to ſeek, or lay up earthly treaſures; but he teaches men to prefer heavenly and incorruptible above earthly and corruptible treaſures, and to be more concerned for the one than the other. Theſe obſervations are to be applyed to the like excellent advices of the apoſtle Paul upon the ſame ſubject: *In like manner alſo, (I will) that women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefacedneſſe and ſobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly aray, but (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſſe) with good works.* Mat. vi. 19, 20. 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

This text then is not a caution againſt complying with others in things in which there is no harm, but againſt following men in that which is really evil and ſinful.

I ſhould now proceed to ſhew the importance of obſerving this cautionarie direction, according to the explication that has been given, in it's ſeveral branches and articles. But that, with a reflection or two by way of concluſion, muſt be deferred to another opportunity.

DIS-

DISCOURSE II.

ROM. xii. 2.

And be not conformed to this world.

IN discoursing on these words I have proposed in the first place to shew the design and meaning of this direction, *Be not conformed to this world:* Secondly to shew the importance of observing it; and then to add a reflection or two by way of conclusion.

II. Having formerly explained this cautionarie direction, I now proceed to the second head of discourse; *to shew the importance of observing it, and to offer some reasons and arguments against conformity to this world.*

1. It is plain, that *the* wise and holy *apostle esteemed this a thing of no small mo-*

ment. This caution is placed almoſt at the head of the practical directions, with which he concludes this large and copious epiſtle to the Romans. And I ſuppoſe, that the earneſtneſſe, with which this addreſſe begins, ought to be underſtood to be continued and carryed on in the words of the
ver. 1. text. *I beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reaſonable ſervice.* It follows: *And be not conformed to this world.* As if he had ſayd: And by the conſideration of the ſame mercies of God, in which you, as Chriſtians, have partaken abundantly, be perſwaded not to be conformed to this world, and to be upon your guard againſt complying with the men of it in any thing that is evil.

2. By no means, upon no account, be ye like the men of this world in any of their evil and corrupt practiſes. *Though you live where ſin abounds,* and where ſome ſins are even faſhionable, you are to keep yourſelves free from them. Though ſuch things ſhould be practiſed and indulged not only by many, but by the moſt, and thoſe who by means

means of their wit and fine parts, or by their high quality and ſtation in the world, can give reputation to whatever they do, and make almoſt any thing appear graceful; you are not to be moved from your ſtedfaſtneſſe in virtue, or from thoſe purpoſes you have formed upon a ſerious and deliberate view and conſideration of things.

Though our lot ſhould be caſt in times and places, in which there are few who love true religion, and walk in the path of virtue; and though theſe few ſhould be mean in their outward appearance; let us be contented to have our portion with them. And though in the way of irreligion and vice ſhould be found the learned, the rich, the great and honourable of this world; let us not be drawn aſide by their example. We ought not to be induced to any complyances that are ſinful. This is a forbidden and dangerous complaiſance. We may part with what elſe we will for peace ſake, and for the good of others. But we can do no man any good upon the whole by parting with our integrity. I ſay upon the whole: for poſſibly by ſome acts of wickedneſſe the preſent temporal intereſt of ſome particular

particular perſons may be advanced. But it is a moſt unreaſonable thing, that one man ſhould hazard his eternal ſalvation for the ſake of the temporal grandeur of another. And beſides, he who upon any conſiderations whatever violates the lawes of God and reaſon ſets his neighbour a pernicious example, that may harden him in ſin to his final and utter ruin.

Let us not then go over to thoſe who are involved in the practiſe of vice. But let us do all that lyes in our power to bring them over to the love and practiſe of true holineſſe. And for this end let us endeavour to ſet religion in a good light: Let our converſation be an example of ſtrict virtue, without auſterity. If our mirth is without levity, let us alſo be ſerious without moroſeneſſe or peeviſhneſſe. Above all, let our religion be ſincere and undiſſembled; not an empty, though ſolemn profeſſion, but a real principle, producing the good fruits of righteouſneſſe, gentleneſſe and mercie.

3. Herein, it muſt be owned, there is no ſmall difficulty. But *there is a neceſſity of it*, unleſs the world were ſo reformed that

that all in general were wise and good. Our Blessed Lord therefore says: *Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* And says St. John: *We know, that whosoever is born of God sinneth not. But he that is begoten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lyeth in wickedness.* *Mat.* vii. 13, 14. 1 *John* v. 18.

4. It is an ancient precept in the law of Moses: *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* And Solomon says: *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: My son, walk thou not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path.* It has been always esteemed by wise men a noble and commendable resolution of Joshua: *As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord*; though all the tribes, and other families of Israel, should forsake the Lord, and go after other gods. But *Christians are better fortifyed against the temptation of numerous examples than other men*, and have stronger *Ex.* xxiii. 2. *Prov.* i. 10 *and* 15. *Josh.* xxiv. 15.

motives

motives to ſtedfaſtneſſe in virtue. They know better than others the excellence and obligations of true holineſſe, and the deformity of ſin, and the different conſequences of each. If it would be a fault in other men, it muſt be much more ſo in them, to be influenced by numbers to forſake the paths of religion and virtue.

5. And though the number of *the ſincerely good and reſolutly virtuous* may be ſmall in a comparative view, yet they *are more than a few* upon the whole. Some there have been in all ages, who have approved themſelves to God and their own conſciences. The apoſtle to the Hebrews having given a catalogue of excellent perſons from almoſt the begining of time, ſome of whom *endured the tryal of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented,* animates the Chriſtians of his days with the conſideration of their number, when collected together. *Wherefore,* ſays he, *ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that does ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us.*

Heb. xi.

xii. 1.

6. Some

6. Some *ſingularity*, or eminence, and uncommon ſtedfaſtneſſe in that which is truly good and excellent, *is very becoming, and even expedient in Chriſtians.* How can it be otherwiſe? If the principles and precepts of their religion be more ſublime, pure and perfect, than thoſe of any other religion, and have a ſuitable influence; muſt they not neceſſarily create ſome difference between them and other men? They are certainly obliged to act according to the truths they have received. They gladly would, that others ſhould keep them companie. But if they obſtinatly refuſe, and will not be perſwaded, they muſt leave them behind, and follow Jeſus whither he leads them. *If ye were of the world,* ſays our Lord to his diſciples, *the world would love his own: but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* Chriſt ſuppoſeth, that as his people are not of the world, ſo they will often meet with diſagreeable treatment in it. But they are to remember their character, and to endeavour to excell, and thereby to be uſeful. After this manner he ſpeaks to his people and followers: *John* xv. 19.

followers: *Ye are the ſalt of the earth. But if the ſalt have loſt it's ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be troden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick, and it giveth light to all that are in the houſe. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.* Says St. Paul to the Epheſians: *Be not ye partakers with them; for ye were ſome time darkneſſe, but now are ye light in the Lord.* Once more, in the epiſtle to the Philippians: *That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world.*

Mat. v. 13—16.

Eph. v. 7, 8.

Philip. ii. 15.

7. *Our bleſſed Lord* highly *approves, and will reward* and diſtinguiſh *thoſe, who are faithful to him in the midſt of temptations, and uphold the honour of his name in the world.* He ſayd to his diſciples: *Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.* In the book of

Luke xii. 32.

of the Revelation he encourages some by his servant John: *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments. And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthie. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my father, and before his angels.* Rev. iii. 4, 5.

8. Finally, *there will be much comfort and satisfaction of mind resulting from this conduct, even in this world.* The context suggests this argument. *Present your bodies*, give up yourselves sincerely to God, as *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Let the temper of your mind become truly religious, spiritual and heavenly, instead of being any longer sensual and carnal: *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.* Then you will not only know and discern, but approve, and delightfully perform that reasonable and excellent worship and obedience, which the gospel

goſpel requires. Hold on then in the way of religion and virtue, notwithſtanding the temptations you meet with to decline and forſake it: the pleaſure will be great, your comforts will grow and encreaſe, and you will more and more approve the choice you have made, as wiſe and reaſonable.

III. I ſhall now conclude with a few reflections.

1. *Be not conformed to this world.* Is there occaſion for ſuch a caution as this? Is the world in which we live degenerate and corrupt? and are we lyable to be miſled and enſnared by it? May not this diſpoſe us to a life of privacie and retirement? or reconcile us to it, if it is our lot? Muſt not this alſo abate our affection for this world, and life therein, and encreaſe our willingneſſe to depart out of it, whenever God pleaſeth? If we are continued in the world, and act therein; let us take care, both that we be not enſnared ourſelves, and that no one be the worſe for us. Let us ſcorn to give any countenance and ſupport to falſhood or vice. Let us eſteem it our indiſ-

indiſpenſable duty to anſwer the ends of life. If preferment is not to be obtained, but by baſe and ſinful compliances, let us give over all thoughrs of riſing in the world. If we cannot keep our ſtation, without partirg with our integrity, let us reſign it. It is better to live with a good conſcience in obſcurity and contempt, than to enjoy the careſſes and applauſes of fellow-creatures in the way of falſhood and iniquity. Better, I ſay: for the end of ſuch will be happie and glorious. The pſalmiſt of old could ſay: *I had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedneſſe. For the Lord God is a ſun and ſhield. The Lord will give grace and glorie, and no good thing will he withold from him that walketh uprightly. O Lord of hoſts, bleſſed is the man that truſteth in thee.* Pſalm lxxxiv.

2. Let us each one, in our ſeveral ſtations and circumſtances, attend to this caution: *Be not conformed to this world.*

You that are *young* poſſibly will admit to be warned and admoniſhed. I ſhall therefore remind you of a few particulars. To perſons of your age the world and

many things therein have peculiar charms; and what is cuſtomarie and reputable comes to you with ſtrong recommendations, and muſt be very taking. You are deſirous of eſteem, and think it fit and becoming in ſuch as you to lay hold of that which tends to render you acceptable and agreeable, or to raiſe and advance you in the world. But, if you have a ſerious ſenſe of religious things, you muſt be aware, that you are not to follow the example of others, whether right or wrong. You will do well therefore, whilſt you are ſeting out in the world, to form a fixed purpoſe and reſolution of mind, that you will govern yourſelves by the rules of reaſon and revelation. Take heed, that the commonneſſe of ſome ſins never abate the horrour and dread you once had of them. Avoid friendſhip and intimacie with the corrupt and degenerate part of mankind; *leſt you learn their ways, and get a ſnare to your ſoul.* Let your uſual companions be ſuch as appear to have impreſſions of religion upon their minds, and walk in the paths of virtue. You will be helpful to each other; good beginings will

Prov. xxii. 25.

be cherished and emproved, and you will keep one another in countenance, if you should meet with some, who are so vile and daring, as to scoff at religion and virtue, and ridicule your conscientious respect to the obligations of either.

But, beside the young, there are *others* also, to whom this cautionarie direction might be addressed, if they would receive it. For, as the young are lyable to be seduced by their companions and equals: so likewise they who are of *mature age* may be in danger of being misled by the bad example of some of their equals in age and station; or by some of superior station, influence and authority; who to outward appearance are serious and attentive, but it is only to the honours, riches, preferments, state and grandeur of this world. Our Lord freely reproved such people, and warned others against them; as may be seen at large in the twenty third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, and elsewhere. *Then spake Jesus unto the multitude and to his disciples, saying: The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses seat. All therefore whatever they bid you observe, that observe and* Mat. xxiii. 1—3.

do: but do ye not after their works. For
ver. 5. *they ſay and do not. But all their works*
ver. 13. *they do to be ſeen of men. But woe unto you ſcribes and phariſees, hypocrites: for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men. For ye neither go in yourſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entering to go in.* Our
Luke xii 1. Lord charged his diſciples to *beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſie.* Theſe men had an outward appearance of ſanctity, and were greatly eſteemed by many. Nevertheleſs they were plainly influenced by ſelfiſh views, which prejudiced them againſt the truth, and led them alſo to obſtruct and diſcountenance thoſe who were
John v. 44. well diſpoſed to it. *How can ye believe,* ſaid our Lord to ſome of them, *which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only?* St. Paul
Tit. i. 11. obſerves to Titus, that ſome *teach things which they ought not, for filthie lucre's ſake.*
ii. 1. *But,* ſays he, *ſpeak thou the things which become ſound doctrine.* He earneſtly cautions Timothie againſt a covetous diſpoſition, which had been fatal to ſome, who had taken upon them the profeſſion of the
1 Tim. vi. 10, 11. Chriſtian religion, ſaying: *The love of money*

ney is the root of all evil, which while ſome coveted after they have erred from the faith and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee theſe things, and follow after righteouſneſſe, godlineſſe, faith, love, patience, meekneſſe. An undue love of wealth, honour, influence and authority, may be as prejudicial to the intereſts of religion in a man's mind, as an inordinate love of ſenſual pleaſure. And there may be as much need for ſome to guard againſt the example of the formal, who are covetous, ambitious and aſpiring, as for others to be upon their guard againſt that of the gay and voluptuous, the thoughtleſs and inconſiderate.

Let us then all attend to this cautionarie direction, and the thoughts annexed to it in the ſame verſe: *And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

And let us beg of God to aſſiſt us in reſiſting the temptations of a vain world: that we may never be induced to follow a multitude in that which is evil; but may be

be followers of thoſe, who in ancient or later times have given an example of lively faith and ſtedfaſt virtue: that we may at length ſit down with them, not only in peace and ſafety, but in the plentiful poſſeſſion of the trueſt riches, and the full enjoyment of the pureſt and ſublimeſt entertainments, in the kingdom of heaven for ever and ever. Amen.

The E N D.

Publiſhed by the ſame AUTHOR.

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A

SERMON

Occasioned by the

DEATH

Of the late REVEREND

WILLIAM HARRIS, D. D.

Who dyed *May* 25. 1740.

Æt. LXV.

By NATHANIEL LARDNER.

LONDON:

Sold by JOSEPH DAVIDSON at the *Angel*, and JOHN GRAY at the *Cross-Keys*, both in the *Poultry*. MDCCXL.

TO THE

CONGREGATION

OF

Proteſtant Diſſenters,

Meeting in

CROUCHED FRYARS, LONDON,

This SERMON,

Occaſioned by the DEATH of their late Honoured and Worthy Paſtor,

The REVEREND

Dr. WILLIAM HARRIS,

And Publiſhed at their Requeſt,

Is Inſcribed by

Their humble Servant,

N. LARDNER.

2 THESS. i. 10.

When he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

WHEN our Lord comes again, he comes to judge the world, and to reward every man according to his works; as the Apoſtle writes in this context to the Chriſtians at *Theſſalonica*, who ſuffered perſecution for the goſpel: *It is a righteous thing with God to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled reſt with us: when the Lord ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that*

 believe:

believe : that is, when he ſhall come to be glorified, in the eye of the whole world, in the puniſhments inflicted on the final and irreconcilable enemies of God and religion, and in the glorious and happy circumſtances of thoſe who have ſincerely embraced the truth, and have been under the power and influence of it.

We may emprove theſe words, by obſerving and enlarging ſomewhat upon theſe three propoſitions:

I. *Chriſt* will come again.

II. When he comes, he will be glorified in the happy and advantageous circumſtances of his people.

III. He will be admired by all who have believed in him, and continued faithful to the end.

PROP. I. I. *Chriſt will come again.* This is no leſs certain, than that he once dwelt on this earth. The time is ſtill a ſecret to us, and perhaps to all orders of intelligent creatures. But the thing itſelf is undoubted. He will come again at the time appointed of the Father, as St. *Peter* obſerves in one of his firſt ſermons after the deſcent of the Spirit: *whom the heavens muſt receive, till the time of the reſtitution of all*

Acts iii. 21.

all things. At the very inſtant of his aſcenſion, his diſciples were expreſly aſſured of it by two angels; *This ſame Jeſus*, ſay they, *which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner, as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.* Our Lord himſelf often ſpoke of it to his diſciples, and with the fulleſt aſſurance of the certainty of the event. *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my ſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.* But he never acquaints them with the time. And becauſe, for wiſe reaſons, that is kept ſecret, he frequently exhorts them to watchfulneſſe and circumſpection. *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come . . . Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching . . . . Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh.*

Acts i. 11.

John xiv. 2, 3.

But though the time is unknown, the ſecond coming of their Lord is no leſs the object of the faith of God's people now, than his firſt coming was of the ſaints under former diſpenſations. And the fulfilment of ancient predictions, in his firſt coming, confirms the hope of his appearing again. Nor

is the great design of his coming into this world as yet accomplished. He will therefore certainly come once more, to compleat the work he has begun.

We also know some of the circumstances of his expected coming, which are very different from those of the first. Then he was in the form of a servant. Hereafter he will appear in the character of the universal Lord and judge: *He will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire: He comes in the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels with him: He will sit on the throne of his glory, and before him will be gathered all nations.*

PROP. II. II. *When Christ comes again, he will be glorified in the happy and advantageous circumstances of his people.* Here we may observe two things: *first*, what there will be, at that time, in their circumstances, which will reflect honour upon him. *Secondly*, what perfections in him will then be glorifyed and appear illustrious.

1. *First*, what there will be, at that time, in the circumstances of his people, that will reflect honour and lustre upon him. There will be such things as these; the perfection of

of their holineſſe, their external glory, and their great number.

1.) One thing in *Chriſt*'s people, which will then reflect honour upon him, is *the perfection of their holineſſe.* They, who then appear among his people, and are owned by him, are ſuch as had believed in him, and ſerved him faithfully in this world. The virtue of theſe, which here had ſome alloys and imperfections, will then be compleated. *The church, which he loved, and for which he gave himſelf, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word, will* then *be preſented to him a glorious church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, being holy and without blemiſh.* *Eph.* v. 25—27.

2.) Another thing in his people that will reflect honour upon him is *their external glory*, or the luſtre of their perſons; their bodies being then raiſed up immortal, and no more lyable to death, or diſeaſes. Soul and body are reunited, freed from all the infirmities of ſinful and mortal fleſh. They have enlarged capacities, fitted for the nobleſt ſervices; celeſtial minds, and celeſtial bodies; bodies no longer clogs to the ſoul in it's divine employments, but made fit for a partnerſhip with it in uninterrupted and endleſs praiſe

and

and happineſſe. The repreſentations, which the ſcripture gives us of this glory of the
1 *Cor* xv. 42—49. ſaints, are to this purpoſe : *So alſo is the reſurrection of the dead : It is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption ; it is ſown diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory ; it is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power ; it is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body-----The firſt man is of the earth earthy, the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven. And as we have born the image of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image*
Philip. iii. 21. *of the heavenly------We look for the Saviour, the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body.* So St. *Paul.* And, ſays
1 *John* iii. 2. another Apoſtle : *It does not yet appear, what we ſhall be : but this we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

3.) In the day of his ſecond coming *Chriſt* will be glorifyed in *the number and great multitude of his ſaints.* He himſelf once ſpoke
Luke xii. 32. of his diſciples and people, as a *little flock.* It was ſo then indeed. Few there were that believed in him ; fewer ſtill, who had the courage to own him publicly, and before the world. Moſt men were then ignorant of him,

him, or offended at him. And oftentimes his profeſſed viſible people have made but a ſmall and inconſiderable appearance, in compariſon of the reſt of the world. But in that day, the number of his redeemed ones will appear to be a great multitude; when all who have held the faith of *Jeſus*, or dyed in the hope and expectation of him, in any age, ſhall be gathered together from all the ends of the earth, and ſhall come from the eaſt and the weſt to meet their triumphant Lord. Says St. *John* in the *Revelation*: *After this I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations and kindred, and people and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cryed with a loud voice, ſaying: Salvation unto our God, which ſiteth on the throne, and unto the lamb.* Rev. vii. 9, 10.

If *Chriſt*'s people and followers ſhould not then appear to be ſo numerous, as thoſe who have not known him, or not obeyed him; yet they may, as they certainly will, be a great number, exceeding what the contracted charity, or the melancholy apprehenſions of ſome now admit of and ſuppoſe. There may be many among his ſaints,

ſaints, not only out of all nations and people, but alſo out of all ſects and parties; ſome of which were far from being very conſpicuous or renowned on this earth.

There will be many of all ranks, of different gifts and attainments: Some, of great learning, and the moſt exalted capacity; who preferred the knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and him crucifyed, above all other ſcience; as beſt ſuited to ſecure the practiſe of virtue, and advance it to the greateſt perfection, and ſupport the mind under the afflictions of this life. Others there will be, of meaner capacities, unable by the exerciſe of their own reaſon, to trace out the principles and obligations of religion and virtue, or to comprehend the abſtruſe ſpeculations, and profound reaſonings of the philoſophers; who from the doctrine, miraculous works, great example, conſpicuous and well-atteſted death and reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*, have learned the nature and obligation of true religion, as conſiſting in the love of God and our neighbour, and the certainty of future recompenſes, and have been engaged thereby to perfect holineſſe in the fear of God. Some there will be in this number, who had gone far from God, and been greatly entangled

tangled in the ſnares of an evil world, and were in the utmoſt danger of everlaſting perdition; who having been pierced with a ſenſe of ſin, and drawn by the gracious invitations of the goſpel, became ſincere penitents, and eminent ſaints. Others, who having been educated in the principles of the Chriſtian doctrine, and having been from the beginning under the impreſſions of them, continued to walk with Chriſt in white, and kept their garments clean, unſpotted from the world. There will be here a glorious appearance of ſuch as bought the truth, and would not ſell it; who took the kingdom of heaven by violence, and choſe the narrow path of virtue that leads to the ſight of God and the heavenly life: when they, who ſhould have animated and encouraged them by their counſel and example, laid obſtacles in their way, and would have perſwaded them rather to ſeek the eaſe, riches, honours and preferments of this preſent world. Some there will be of large minds, who ſtudied the principles of reaſon and revelation, and were well acquainted with the mind of Chriſt; who here earneſtly recommended general benevolence, promoted peace and friendſhip among men, and happily prevented contentions and diviſi-

ons. They will have diſtinguiſhed honour in that day. And ſome others, poſſibly, ſhall not miſs of the divine favour, who from falſe apprehenſions, and a miſtaken zeal, had been here too apt to reject ſome, whom they ſhould have received as brethren in Chriſt, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance. There will be ſome, who in this ſtate of trial had done honour to religion, by a chearful, as well as ſteady obedience. They had a comfortable perſwaſion of the divine favour and acceptance, and they rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. They could ſay: *The life, which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* They will triumph and exult, when Chriſt, the judge of all, ſhall confirm the teſtimony they had in their minds, that *they were the children of God.* Others there will be, men of true ſimplicity and integrity, but dejected and low-ſpirited. They hoped, but could never fully clear up to their ſatisfaction, that they loved God; nor arrive at a ſettled perſwaſion, that they were loved of him; who, when the *books ſhall be opened,* will know, to their unſpeakable joy, that *their names* alſo *were writen in the book of life.* There will be a great number, who here on earth were deſpiſed

Gal. ii. 20.

Rev. xx. 12.

deſpiſed of men, and lived in mean condition; who will be owned by Chriſt for his people, as having been reſigned, contented, thankful in the circumſtances allotted them by divine providence. There will be many, who had honoured the Lord with their ſubſtance, who *clothed the naked, fed the hungry, viſited the ſick*, and ſpoke comfortably to thoſe who were caſt down. There will be many who had gone through great tribulation, who *labored* and did *not faint:* a noble and numerous company of martyrs and confeſſors, who took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, or laid down their lives in teſtimony to the truth.

Will not this multitude of ſuch perſons reflect honour upon him, by whom they were redeemed; through whoſe means they were carried ſafe through the temptations of this world, and were enabled to perſevere to the end, notwithſtanding the difficulties they met with? If it be true, as it certainly is, that *they who be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſſe of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteouſneſſe, as the ſtars for ever and ever:* how glorious is Jeſus, the ſource of this wiſdom, the ſpring of this zeal for truth and virtue! Dan. xii. 3.

2. *Secondly*, we are to conſider, what perfections in Chriſt will then be glorified, and appear illuſtrious. And it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that his wiſdom, his power, and his faithfulneſſe will then be very conſpicuous.

1.) *His wiſdom.* The preaching of the croſſe has appeared fooliſhneſſe to many in this world: but then it will be manifeſt, beyond the poſſibility of farther doubt and queſtion, that *the fooliſhneſſe of God*, that divine diſpenſation, which many had deſpiſed, was wiſer than all the wiſdom of men. Some indeed, yea not a few, do now perceive and acknowledge it to be a well laid deſign, admirably ſuited to the weakneſſe and degeneracy of the human nature. And they are ready to ſay with the Apoſtle: *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and the knowledge of God!* And that *God hath abounded toward us in all wiſdom and prudence.* But at that time the contrivance of this diſpenſation will appear ſtill more wonderful. It will be manifeſt, particularly in the great number of the ſaints then collected, and brought together in one, from the ſeveral parts of the world; to whom *Chriſt has been made of God wiſdom, and righteouſneſſe, and ſanctification, and redemption.*

1 *Cor.* i. 25.

1 *Cor.* i. 30.

It

It is indeed a vaſt and delightful ſcene of contemplation, which will then lye open to the ſaints; to obſerve the original deſign, ſeveral ſteps, continued progreſſe, and final completion of the recoverie and ſalvation of ſo many frail and ſinful men, by Jeſus Chriſt; and to obſerve the extent of his government of the church, and the world in general, in the ſeveral parts and ages of it, from the time of his exaltation to the right hand of the throne of God, to that great and glorious day, when all mankind are brought before his tribunal.

2.) At that time *the power of Chriſt* will be glorified. It will appear great and wonderful in the reſurrection of the ſaints, juſt performed by his word. This is what our Lord ſpoke of, as ſo marvellous, in anſwer to ſome cavils of the Jews: *For the Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth. And he will ſhew him greater things than theſe, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will. . . . Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves ſhall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life, and* John v. 20—29.

they

they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation.

3.) Another perfection, to be glorified at that time, is *the truth*, or *faithfulneſſe of Chriſt.* This is the day for the full accompliſhment of all his promiſes, upon which his people have depended, and by which they have been animated in the whole of their courſe. Here he delivered rules of life, and made gracious promiſes to ſuch as obeyed them. He encouraged men to forſake all earthly goods for his ſake and the goſpel, aſſuring them of abundant recompenſe hereafter. In his conference with Nicodemus he uſeth theſe expreſſions: *Verily I ſay unto thee : We ſpeak what we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen.* In his preaching he publicly declared with the greateſt ſolemnity : *This is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up at the laſt day. And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.* Once more, he ſays to his diſciples : *In my Father's houſe are many manſions : If it were not ſo, I would have told you.* Upon the ground of a clear conviction of his divine authority

John iii. 11.

John vi. 39, 40.

John xiv. 2.

thority and character, which he claimed, and a perſwaſion of the truth of all his declarations and promiſes, his people have acted as they have done. They have given themſelves up to him, and obeyed him. They have been induced to ſeek principally ſuch things as are now diſtant and unſeen ; and not to prefer, but oftentimes to forego the pleaſures, poſſeſſions, honours of this preſent world, and every thing deſirable therein, in hope of being raiſed up by him to immortal life and everlaſting happineſſe. So they have acted: ſo they have believed, and truſted in him. And now his truth is manifeſt in the event. Thoſe things, which were once the objects of deſire and hope, are poſſeſſed and enjoyed. His faithfulneſſe was believed before, and there was good evidence of the truth of all he ſayd, and they who depended upon it, acted wiſely and reaſonably : but now it is even ſeen. Not one jot or tittle of his word has fallen to the ground, but all is fulfilled. Not one of thoſe *little ones*, whom men deſpiſed, has periſhed, whom he had aſſured that it was the good pleaſure of the Father to give them a kingdom. Not one of thoſe, whom the Father had given him, is wanting, but all his ſheep are placed at his right hand.

His

His truth and faithfulneſſe may be farther illuſtrated, at that time, by the peculiar degrees of honour and glory conferred upon thoſe, whoſe virtue has been eminent, and tried by great difficulties and ſufferings here. Many indeed, and great are the encouragements, which he gave in the courſe of his miniſtry to thoſe who ſhould be eminent, ſtedfaſt and conſtant in virtue. And future rewards will certainly be anſwerable to thoſe encouraging declarations, and the hopes he has raiſed by them. *Bleſſed are ye*, ſays he, *when men ſhall revile you and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil of you falſly for my ſake: Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.* When the diſciples deſired to know, who ſhould be *greateſt in the kingdom of heaven*, he did not deny that there would be diſtinctions therein: but intimates, that he who ſhould be moſt humble, and for the ſake of truth and the good of mankind, moſt abaſe himſelf, would in the end be moſt exalted, and be *greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.* When the two diſciples petitioned, *to ſit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, in his kingdom*, he did not grant their requeſt; aſſuring them it was not a thing to be determined by him, upon

Matth. v. 11, 12.

Matth. xviii. 1, 4.

upon the ground of any perſonal regards and conſiderations. Nevertheleſs he adds: *It ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.* And he inſinuates to them, that one way of being neareſt to him in his glory, is to *drink of his cup, and be baptiſed with the baptiſm, with which he was to be baptiſed*; that is, to ſuffer in teſtimony to truth, if called thereto. In figurative expreſſions he pronounces a ſpecial bleſſing upon men of uniform virtue and obedience. *Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants, whom the Lord, when he cometh ſhall find watching. Verily, I ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and make them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them.* When Thomas, upon the ground of an overbearing evidence, admitted the truth of his reſurrection, our Lord graciouſly accepted the profeſſion of faith which he made: But at the ſame time, he breaks forth into a ſuperior commendation of ſuch as ſhould be better diſpoſed to truth. *Jeſus ſaith unto him: Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed: Bleſſed are they which have not ſeen, and yet have believed.*

Matt. xx. 23. Luke xii. 37. John xx. 29.

Agreeable hereto are many declarations of the Apoſtles. *For*, ſays St. Paul, *our light* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight
1 *Pet.* i. 7. *of glory.* And St. Peter : *That the tryal of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praiſe and honour and glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt :* that is, they who when tried by difficulties and ſufferings in the cauſe of truth, are not thereby overcome, but ſtill continue faithful, and are only more and more refined and ſanctified, ſhall receive abundance of honour and praiſe at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.

Hereby the Lord will be glorified ; when the truth and equity of his judgement ſhall be manifeſt in rewards, proportioned to his declarations, and the great hopes he had raiſed in the minds of the ſincere and upright. The cauſe of virtue is then compleatly vindicated by him. Every inſtance of right conduct is recompenſed. And the moſt eminent virtue, which here on earth is ſometimes expoſed to the greateſt difficulties, and the worſt reproaches, receives an equal reward. This is glorious to the judge of the world.

Theſe are perfections of Chriſt, which are glori-

glorified by the perfect holineſſe, external glory, and great number of his people. For, as the Apoſtle ſays, *Whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice in it:* ſo alſo is Chriſt, the head, honoured and glorified in the honour of each ſaint, much more in the honour and glory of the whole church, which is his body. This is the day, when good men, of all ages and nations, of every rank and condition, of different capacities and attainments, who have lived under the ſeveral diſpenſations of reaſon and revelation, make up one viſible and harmonious aſſembly. Nor is there any longer one member of the church ſuffering, or tempted: All have finiſhed their courſe, and their warfare is accompliſhed. In the ſtile of the Revelation, *they are clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands,* the enſigns of victory and triumph.

1 Cor. xii. 26

Rev. vii. 9.

It is then a day glorious to Chriſt, and a day of unſpeakable joy to his people. He muſt be honoured and revered by thoſe alſo, to whom his appearance is not joyful. For all the unjuſt neglect and contempt of him and

his people are for ever confuted, and put to ſhame ; and a full conviction is wrought in the minds of all, concerning the reaſonableneſſe of the gracious promiſes formerly made in favour of virtue, and the great rewards now conferred upon it.

It is, moreover, reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that at this time Chriſt will be very glorious in the eſteem of the bleſſed angels, and all orders of intelligent beings. For the angels are ſaid to be *miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter to them, who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation.* And they *deſired to look into thoſe things*, that were done at the publication of the goſpel. It may be therefore juſtly concluded, that they likewiſe partake in the joy and acclamations of this day ; and that in their eyes, or well as in thoſe of his people, Chriſt is glorified : eſpecially ſince they are ſpoken of as preſent at this time, and coming as attendants on the judge of the world.

Heb. i. 14.

1 *Pet.* i. 12.

See alſo *Rev.* v. 11—14.

PROP. III. III. When Chriſt comes again, he will be *admired*, particularly, *by all them that believe.* Three things will appear admirable at that time : Chriſt's perſonal glory, the greatneſſe of his love in what he has done for his people, and

and his goodneſſe in the kind reception he gives them, and the great reward he beſtows upon them.

1. *Chriſt's perſonal glory.* He comes on the clouds, with an innumerable company of the heavenly inhabitants in his train. And many awful appearances there will be to encreaſe the grandeur and ſolemnity of that day. There will be alſo the glory of his own perſon, ſuited to his real dignity, and the great characters he ſuſtains, of head of the church and judge of the world. Once, when he was on earth, in the days of his humiliation, he was gloriouſly transformed in the view of three of his diſciples: *His face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment became white as the light.* The deſcription given of that one tranſient glorification may help us to ſome imperfect idea of the preſent glory of the human nature of Chriſt in his ſtate of exaltation, and of that in which he will appear, when he comes to judge the world. But though we cannot now diſtinctly conceive of it, we may be aſſured it will be ſuch, as will raiſe the wonder of all, and afford every believer a pleaſing ſurpriſe and joy. Each ſaint will have a glory of his own, with which he will be

be ſatisfied: All will admire, and be delighted with the tranſcendent glory and majeſty of him who is their common Lord and head.

2. Another thing that will be admired at that time is *the love of Chriſt in what he has done for his people, in order to bring them to the glorious and happy circumſtances in which they then appear.* This was always matter of wonder to thoſe who duly conſidered it. It will hereafter appear more admirable. It was owing to the doctrine taught by him in a mean condition, and farther confirmed by his painful death and glorious reſurrection, that their hearts were won to God and virtue. It was by *looking unto Jeſus, who endured the croſſe, deſpiſing the ſhame, and then ſate down on the right hand of the throne of God*; that they *laid aſide every weight, and ran with patience the race that was ſet before them.* If he had not firſt overcome neither had they overcome, as they have done, the allurements and terrours of an evil world. His victory encouraged them, and made them conquerours. So it is in the Apoſtle's triumphant challenge: *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, or diſtreſſe, or perſecution .... ? Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerours, through him that loved us.*

Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Rom. viii. 35---37.

3. An-

3. Another thing, that will be admired by them that believe, is the *goodneſſe of Chriſt in the kind and gracious reception he gives them, and the reward he beſtows upon them.* This may be argued from the repreſentation, which our Lord himſelf has given of the ſolemn procedure at the end of the world: *Then ſhall the king ſay unto them on the right hand: Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirſty, and ye gave me drink; a ſtranger, and ye took me in. Then ſhall the righteous anſwer unto him, ſaying: Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirſty, and gave thee drink?* It will appear amazing goodneſſe in him, to conſider, and reward acts of kindneſſe, done to their afflicted and neceſſitous brethren, as done to himſelf; eſpecially as they are conſcious, that the principle of virtue, from which thoſe good works have proceeded, was formed by his care and inſtitution, and was owing to that love, wherewith he firſt loved them, in living a life of ſorrows, and dying a painful death for their ſake. *Matth.* xxv. 24.

Thus

Application. Thus we have meditated a while upon the ſeveral parts of this text. And we perceive, the day of Chriſt's ſecond coming will be a day of great ſplendour and magnificence. And ſhall it not be a day of joy unto us? ſhall we not partake in the glory and triumphs of that time? This well deſerves our conſideration. It was a deſirable thing, to ſee the Saviour of the world, when clothed in the ſinleſs infirmities of the human nature. It muſt be much more deſirable, to ſee him coming in his glory. But neither of theſe his comings is of advantage unto all. They were his diſciples only, and ſuch others, as attentively heard his words, and received them into good and honeſt hearts, who were entitled to a bleſſing, as he ſays to them: *Bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee; and your ears, for they hear.* So it will be likewiſe in the time of his ſecond coming. He appears to compleat the redemption of thoſe only, whoſe ſalvation was begun here, and who were made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſons of God.

Matth. xiii. 16.

This text leads us to two things, neceſſary to our ſeeing Chriſt with joy; that we be *ſaints;*

ſaints, and *believers*; or, that we have a faith, which purifyes the heart, and produces works of righteouſneſſe in our lives. So let us be prepared for the coming of the Lord. And let us be diligent, *that we may be found of him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs.* Let us be ſuch in the frame of our mind, and in all our actions, at every ſeaſon, that we may be ready to meet him, when-ever he comes. Theſe are they, whom Chriſt pronounceth bleſſed, as before ſhewn. His words at length are theſe; *Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching. Verily I ſay unto you, that he will gird himſelf, and make them ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them. And if he ſhall come in the ſecond watch, or come in the third watch, and find them ſo, bleſſed are thoſe ſervants.*

2 *Pet.* iii. 14.

Luke xii. 37, 38.

May this be our caſe, as we have reaſon to believe it was that of our Honoured Paſtour, whoſe death we, and many others, now lament! At the ſame time we ought to be thankful, that he has been ſo long upheld by his Lord and Maſter in his ſervice, and particularly, as paſtour of this congregation, for the ſpace of forty years and upwards: Of

The Character.

which relation to this ſociety, and the harmonie that had all along reigned therein, he ſpeaks with ſatisfaction in the preface to his *Diſcourſes on the principal Repreſentations of the Meſſiah, throughout the Old Teſtament:* " Recommending them particularly to thoſe " of his own charge, to whom he had then " ſtood ſo long related, and with whom he " had lived in an uninterrupted peace, " and with many marks of a diſtinguiſh- " ing reſpect:" which is to your, as well as his honour. He concludes that preface with theſe words, ſhewing what was the conſtant aim of his labours, and what the reward he moſt deſired: " Such as they " are, *ſays he*, I make a humble ſacrifice of " them to the honour of the bleſſed Re- " deemer, and lay them at his feet: having " no higher ambition in this world, than to " ſerve his intereſt, and be accepted of him, " nor higher expectation and hope, than to " be with him, and behold his glory."

His ſermons in the ſtated courſe of his miniſtry were judicious, and practical, filled with juſt ſentiments, and texts of ſcripture aptly applied; compoſed with great propriety of

of expreſſion, and exactneſſe of order and method; ſuited to meaner, as well as better capacities; the fruit of much ſtudy, and ſerious thought and conſideration. The ſubjects of his preaching were of a large compaſſe, taking in the general principles of religion, with the grounds and evidences of them, and the important duties of the Chriſtian life, recommended by forcible motives and conſiderations: Not neglecting any of the various wants and exigences of men, but aiming, by proper and well-choſen arguments, to awaken the ſecure, quicken the ſlothful, comfort the afflicted, and ſtrengthen the weak: Nor always laying the foundations of religion, but carrying on good beginings toward perfection. Thus, as a faithful ſteward and wiſe overſeer, he divided to every one a portion. How he performed ſome other branches of his paſtoral office, many of you muſt likewiſe be very ſenſible, and can bear teſtimony to the fidelity and tenderneſſe, with which he admoniſhed, warned, adviſed, comforted, in private, as the circumſtances of things required. His performances at the public ordinations of miniſters were always greatly eſteemed.

In funeral diſcourſes, whether for miniſters, or other uſeful Chriſtians, he had a happy art of giving the beſt likeneſſe without flatterie. His delivery, as you well know, was grave and manly, entirely free from affectation, with very little action, in a word, worthy of himſelf. As his aſſiſtance was much deſired in many other places, and his preaching was generally acceptable; I truſt there are many, to whom he has been, under God, the inſtrument of forming a principle of virtue, and of cheriſhing and emproving it by the word of God diſpenſed by him; who ſhall be to him, in the great day, a crown of glory and rejoicing. Notwithſtanding the exactneſſe of his own compoſitions, he was a candid hearer of others; and was a true friend, as well as an excellent pattern to younger miniſters, in preaching and in converſation.

In his family he was a watchful guardian, a faithful monitor, an affectionate friend.

He had a great command of his temper and his words. He was ſcarce ever ſeen to be angry. He very ſeldom ſayd any thing to the diſadvantage of any one. And was much

much more apt to commend, than find fault.

He was a ſteady friend. If any, who ſtood in that relation to him, came into trouble; he did not deſert them, but liberally relieved, and affectionately comforted them, and perſiſted to take care of them under continued diſtreſſes and afflictions; though ſometimes ſome ſuch returns were made, as could not be altogether agreeable.

He was happy in the eſteem and reſpect of great numbers of his brethren in the miniſtry, and many others; men of much reading, ſound judgement, unqueſtioned probity, and eminent in their ſeveral ſpheres and ſtations. Not now to inſiſt on the regard ſhewn him by thoſe of the congregation, to which he was more eſpecially related, and in whom he had much comfort: which was mentioned before.

He ſcarce ever loſt any friendſhip entirely. For being always maſter of himſelf, he never irritated by haſty and offenſive expreſſions the diſpleaſure, which any through prejudice might conceive againſt him. And, as goodwill had never ceaſed, nor enmity taken place,

on

on his part, when opportunities offered ; (which were not unlikely to happen, conſidering his reputation and influence in the world ;) he chearfully performed offices of kindneſſe for ſuch perſons, or their friends, and thereby laid them under freſh obligations. Thus he overcame evil with good, and regained the love and eſteem of thoſe, who for a while had been eſtranged from him.

He was a ſincere friend of religious and civil liberty. And was always of a catholic ſpirit, loving good Chriſtians of every communion.

Such were his attainments, that it may be well ſuppoſed he was particularly fitted for the converſation of men of rank, and of extenſive knowledge. But he could condeſcend. And in the ſociety of meaner perſons he was the ſame man ; as well-pleaſed, and as free and communicative, as in any other ; provided he found an inquiſitive temper, and ſome good underſtanding in the things of religion. In thoſe ſeaſons he appeared very amiable to ſuch as were attentive, and diſpoſed to obſerve.

The beſt judges have acknowledged the pieces

pieces publiſhed by him, which conſiſt of ſeveral volumes, and are upon divers ſubjects and occaſions, to be the works of a maſterly hand. How conſtant he was in the public ſervices of his miniſterial office in this place, and how frequent elſewhere, are things well known. And when it is conſidered how laboured and finiſhed all his compoſitions were; and that, beſides, he read much, both ancient and modern authors; had a numerous acquaintance, and a large epiſtolary correſpondence; and that with care he reviſed many works of his learned friends, and kindly forwarded ſome of them to public view, and performed abundance of other good offices in private, and had a concern in many great and uſeful deſigns of a more public nature; it may be ſomewhat difficult to conceive, how he ſhould have ſufficient time and ſtrength for what he did. But he was bleſſed with a moſt ready apprehenſion, which fitted him for quick diſpatch; and moreover, he loved employment, and could endure long and cloſe application.

But to draw to a concluſion: Dr. HARRIS may be ſaid to have excelled among good men,

men, on account of the number of virtues poſſeſſed by him in a conſpicuous degree, and on account of the great uniformity of his temper and conduct in the ſeveral occurrences of his life. Among great men, in like manner, he had a diſtinction, inaſmuch as there have been few, in whom ſo many accompliſhments have met together and been united. And what may ſerve to confirm this part of the character, however exalted it may appear, is his great reputation in the world, which * began very early, and continued to the laſt; not ſought by him, but attending him, as the ſhadow and concomitant of his merit.

By the greatneſſe of his capacity he was qualified for the higheſt ſtations in life, and might have ſhined therein. But it is as glorious

* Dr. Harris was for a ſhort time Aſſiſtant to Mr. Read in Gravel Lane, Southwark. In 1698. the 23d year of his age, he was choſen to ſucceed the very eminent Mr. Timothy Cruſoe in the paſtoral care of the congregation in Crouched Fryars, London. In 1703. he was entruſted by the Executors of Mr. Nathanael Taylor with the publication of the poſtumous papers of that celebrated preacher; to which he prefixed a preface, an example of that excellent manner, by which all his writings are diſtinguiſhed. How great his credit has been of late years, is well known. I add no more. But, for ſome farther memoirs of Dr. Harris, would refer to the funeral ſermon preached by Dr. Groſvenor.

rious to deſpiſe great things, as to ſeek and obtain them. Merit is an intrinſic thing, and depends not upon outward advantages. Nor is his at all the leſs for chooſing to ſerve God, and abiding in the way moſt agreeable to his own judgement, and endeavouring to be uſeful among thoſe Chriſtians, who were much of the ſame mind with himſelf; to whom he has been an ornament, and will be a laſting Honour.

Concluſion.

The relation that has ſubſiſted between this excellent perſon and us, is now diſſolved and broken by the ſtroke of death. And it becomes us to ſubmit our wills to the divine will and pleaſure, and to acquieſce in this afflictive and diſcouraging event. But there are alſo other duties incumbent on us. It is a direction of the Apoſtle: *Remember them that have had the rule over you, who have ſpoken to you the word of God: and conſidering the end of their converſation*, their ſtedfaſtneſſe and perſeverance, *follow their faith*. There is honour and reſpect due to the memorie of ſuch. And we ought likewiſe to imitate their virtues. We ſhould recollect the inſtructions that have been given us, and *Heb.* xiii. 7.

continue to follow and obey them. We are to be thankful for the bleſſing we have enjoyed ; and are alſo to conſider, that we have had a talent, of which we muſt give an account. If we ſhall be able to give a good account in the end, this will be joyful to thoſe who have been our guides and inſtructors, and to ourſelves. Both they and we ſhall, then, receive a full reward.

THE END.

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